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ABSTRACT

This publication offers a summary overview of initiatives to promote lifelong education and training that have actually been implemented in various European countries. Six chapters describe initiatives that are supporting and promoting lifelong learning, either at a European or national level, in accordance with the six key messages (KMs) spelled out by the European Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning adopted in 2000. The KMs are: new basic skills for all; more investment in human resources; innovation in teaching and learning; valuing learning; rethinking guidance and counseling; and bringing learning closer to home. Each chapter is devoted to one KM and has these components: KM as described in the memorandum; summary of actions at the European level; overview of actions at the European level; and three or four specific initiative categories into which the KM has been divided, each of which includes a summary of actions in national initiatives followed by overviews of the national initiatives. (Contains a 59-item bibliography.) (YLB)

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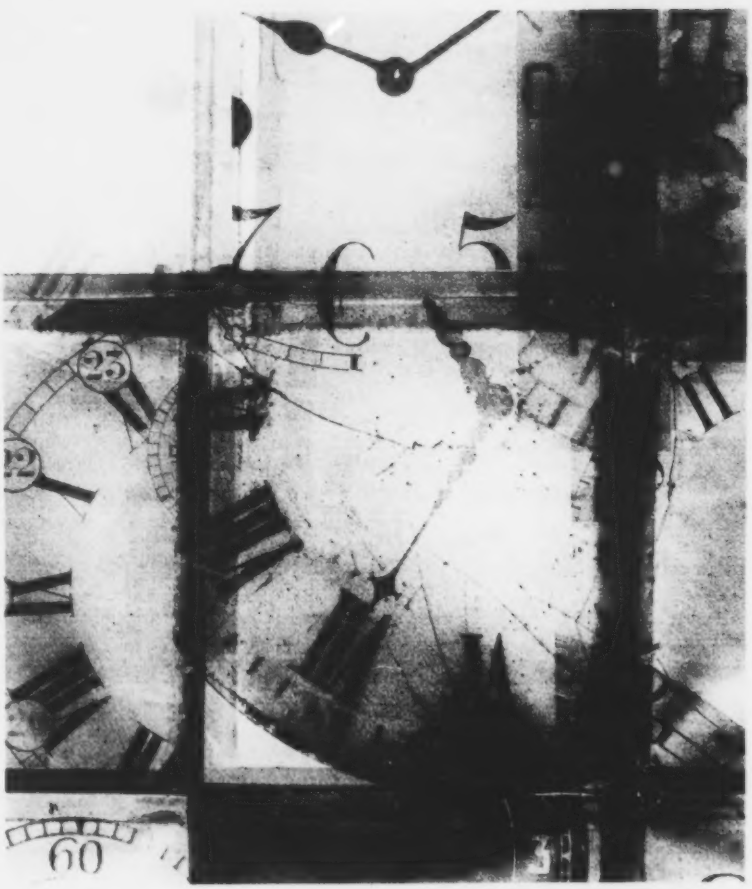

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Survey 3

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PREFACE

The issues of lifelong education and training represent a central concern in the follow-up to the March 2000 Lisbon European Council, a Summit which highlighted the importance of both in ensuring a successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. The subsequent European Commission *Memorandum on lifelong learning* adopted in October 2000 went on to emphasise how education and training are not merely necessary to sustain the employability of wage-earners and their ability to adapt to labour market requirements. Both should also have in their sights the broader objectives of promoting active citizenship and strengthening social cohesion.

The present survey offers a summary overview of initiatives to promote lifelong education and training which have actually been implemented in various European countries. It is the outcome of close cooperation between Eurydice, the information network on education in Europe, and Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. Their collaboration has provided us with a general survey not only of action within formal education and training systems but activities associated with non-formal learning situations too. The survey is thus an integral part of the consultation process initiated by the European Commission following publication of the *Memorandum*, and its findings will be of particular value when the Commission draws up the action plan for lifelong education and training it intends to submit to the Council in the spring of 2002.

If we wish educational standards in Europe to be among the best in the world, it is vital to adjust our educational systems to the requirements of the economy and the knowledge society. The survey reveals that many initiatives are now moving in this direction, and that European cooperation is also contributing to such an adjustment. We are therefore progressing as we should in our joint efforts to achieve the very real aims endorsed by the Stockholm Summit as regards our European systems of education and training, by enhancing their quality and effectiveness, making them easier for anyone at any age to access and opening them up to the rest of the world.

Viviane Reding
Commissioner
Education and Culture
May 2001

FOREWORD

Context

As a contribution to activities under the Swedish presidency and the consultation process organised by the Commission between January and June 2001 on Lifelong Learning, the Eurydice European Unit (EEU) and Cedefop have decided jointly to provide an overview of action undertaken to promote lifelong education and training in different European countries. The purpose of the document is to describe initiatives which are supporting and promoting lifelong learning, both at European and national level, in accordance with the six key messages underlined by the *Memorandum on lifelong learning* published by the European Commission in October 2000.

Readers wishing to appreciate the full range and scope of these initiatives should consult the survey entitled *Lifelong Learning: the contribution of education systems in the Member States of the European Union*, published by Eurydice in March 2000. The survey addresses the complex question of how lifelong education is defined in both national and international debate and discusses how the concept has developed over the years. The main features of the strategies implemented in this area are also examined, country by country, and enable the information gathered for the present overview to be situated in its appropriate context.

The present overview has resulted from the decision by Eurydice to update the above-mentioned survey. In the light of the *Memorandum*, Cedefop was invited to contribute to the update with information that would supplement material available to Eurydice from the national ministries of education. The contribution of Cedefop is thus more concerned with elements of the learning continuum throughout working life, and non-formal areas of vocational education and training (VET) outside the formal system – at the workplace, for example.

Methodology

Working closely with the European Commission, Eurydice devised a questionnaire to gather relevant information. This was sent at the beginning of November 2000, to the National Units (1) in the Eurydice Network located within the ministries responsible for educational matters, or in bodies closely associated with those ministries. Contributions from each country were prepared on the basis of a working partnership involving the National Units and the ministerial departments and services concerned. This data was then forwarded in January 2001 to the EEU which analysed it.

Cedefop did not have a systematically collected body of material from the Member States to update. Its approach was to use information available from the library and documentation

(1) The Eurydice Network at present covers 30 countries (the 15 EU, 3 EFTA/EEA and 12 pre-accession countries). For the purpose of this survey, a questionnaire was sent to the National Units in the 15 EU countries, and in Norway and Iceland which both expressed an interest in taking part.

service, contributions to *Cedefop Info* and other publications, and the results of selected projects relevant to the key messages of the *Memorandum*. Comprehensive data was available on four countries, namely Italy, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden, and derived from studies, in each of them, to determine the extent to which vocational education and training policy is encouraging lifelong learning.

While Cedefop and Eurydice have adopted different procedures for collecting and selecting information, analysis of the material with respect to the thrust of the *Memorandum*, not to mention the drafting of the present publication, have been carried out jointly.

A provisional version of the report was presented to the meeting of the Directors-General of Vocational Training, in Växjö on 21-24 April 2001, and to the Education Committee at its meeting in Brussels on 25 April. It was also submitted to the National Units of the Eurydice Network for approval of those parts of the text to which they had contributed.

The *Memorandum* as a platform for the report

The purpose of the six key messages highlighted by the *Memorandum* is to focus discussion on the essential aspects of lifelong learning. They concentrate on breaking down a particularly wide-ranging subject in order more easily to get to grips with it.

From the practical standpoint, it has not always been easy to link the initiatives identified with a particular key message. Depending on the extent to which they are consolidated, some initiatives include components associated with several of them. In such cases, the strongest link has been established in accordance with the apparently dominant aspect of each project, with a reminder where appropriate of the latter's relevance to other key messages.

However, as a whole, these six points of reference have made it possible to do justice in most cases to the developments and practice which have been identified in the Member States and which themselves often have their own distinctive administrative patterns or divisions of responsibility.

The limits of the exercise

We cannot claim to have identified what is customarily termed, often with little real insight, a body of *good practice*. To do so would have required a far more discriminating analysis not only of the schemes and initiatives themselves, but also the historical, social, economic and political circumstances surrounding them and the aims they were meant to achieve. Furthermore, most of the initiatives referred to here are recent and/or have not been the subject of anything resembling a formal evaluation exercise.

Between them, Eurydice and Cedefop try to cover a wide spectrum of topics in the field of education and training. Nevertheless, most of the initiatives discussed in the following pages relate to formal and, in part, non-formal learning. Little space is devoted to informal contexts even

though they are characteristic of a few initiatives, and not much data about them is centrally available, which poses problems for information collection. Furthermore, while many informal schemes are implemented at local level, the deadlines of the present survey were such that they could not be investigated. It is nevertheless quite clear that interesting initiatives exist.

Neither can it be claimed that information-gathering has been fully comprehensive, given the wide variety of players concerned (ministries, decentralised bodies, associations, firms, trade unions, local authorities, communities, etc.). Moreover, in its follow-up to the *Memorandum*, the European Commission has consulted NGOs (non-governmental organisations) so that experimentation in this sector receives due consideration in further thinking and discussion.

Our aim therefore is to do justice to the renewed sense of vitality now spreading through education and training systems as they seek to adapt to the fresh requirements of our societies.

Future cooperation

We also hope that the present publication will make it easier to identify issues and experiments worthy of further consideration in the future. In pursuing the approach set in motion here, which has involved disregarding conventional distinctions between education and training, we shall also examine in detail the subjects on which future cooperation between Cedefop and Eurydice should be pursued.

The participation of other partners, such as the ETF (the European Training Foundation based in Turin) is envisaged in any future similar undertakings of this kind in order to cover the pre accession countries in central and eastern Europe.

Eurydice and Cedefop actively supported the European Commission in the preparation of its *Memorandum* on Lifelong Learning. With this overview, we now hope to stimulate and contribute to the debate and follow-up to the *Memorandum*, which will culminate in a Lifelong Learning Action Plan for adoption by the Council of education ministers at the end of 2001 and be presented to the European Council of Barcelona at the beginning of 2002.

INTRODUCTION

Both nationally and at European level, the concept of lifelong education and training is to the forefront. In some countries, it is the subject of White Papers or other important policy and strategy documents. On occasions, it is the overriding concern of ministerial departments and the justification for major and minor reforms. In addition, the OECD ([2]) has carried out valuable policy work on key aspects of Lifelong Learning. After declaring 1996 to be the 'European Year of Lifelong Learning' and taking the concept further forward in a variety of statements and initiatives, the European Commission published an entire *Memorandum* on the subject in October 2000. Building on the discussion set out in the 1995 Commission White Paper, *Teaching and learning – Towards the learning society*, the *Memorandum* considers lifelong education as a means of achieving not merely economic prosperity but also active citizenship.

The survey published by Eurydice in March 2000 on the contribution of education systems to lifelong learning, included the following passage in its conclusions:

> *Both a rhetorical platform with a message to get across, and a way of guiding systems to adapt to the new demands of society, the goal of lifelong learning has been the focus of different patterns of implementation. The way in which Member States have taken over the concept depends on the specific nature of their systems. However, all use it to impart the necessary momentum to – and provide the ultimate justification for – reforms they might possibly introduce anyway. It is therefore a unifying force at European level, which is reached via different pathways, with the difficulty that implies in defining it. It is also a concept designed to satisfy what society demands, with little room for half measures.*

How, if at all, have the terms of the discussion moved on a year after the publication of this initial survey? Clearly, not all countries have chosen the same pathway towards lifelong education. What, nevertheless, can be learnt from experiments in the field to date? What are the benchmarks to which policy makers and others actively involved can turn in shaping or reshaping the reforms or actions already undertaken? For while it is easy to agree with the universal and rhetorical aims attributed to the concept whenever it is discussed publicly, it is not so easy to take the strategic decisions required to ensure that they are achieved and to interpret the results of action carried out so far.

On 21-23 March 2001, the Swedish presidency organised a conference in Eskilstuna on 'Adult Learning in a Europe of Learning'. It was in effect the continuation of the meeting on lifelong learning, organised by the French presidency in Biarritz on 4-5 December 2000. We found several contributions at the Eskilstuna conference of special interest for an enlightened reading of the initiatives described in the following chapters, which are based on the *Memo-*

([2]) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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randum Key Messages. The observations concerned and, in particular, those of Professor Kjell Rubenson, (3) deal primarily with the following:

- how responsibility for learning is balanced between the State, firms and civil society;
- the danger of an excessively individual-oriented approach;
- the limited effectiveness of general measures for achieving the aim of education and training for all.

Among the key questions, therefore, are how individuals can be encouraged to assume responsibility for their own lifelong learning and how firms, governments and other partners can support them (particularly if they are in some way disadvantaged or risk exclusion).

Terms of the debate

If citizens are made the focal point and protagonists of lifelong education and training, this does not mean that they alone are responsible for what it can offer. First of all, as Kjell Rubenson pointed out, the goal of civil democracy – which for the *Memorandum* supersedes the aim of employability – would be threatened by an excessively individual-oriented approach, as social needs do not necessarily correspond to individual ones. Secondly, the growing complexity of decisions facing people in areas such as employability (selecting their ideal kind of training, choosing their profession/career, or taking a fresh decision about it, considering how they should upgrade their skills, etc.) is such that they require support and counselling.

This need is all the more acute when the target population is especially vulnerable with little training and few qualifications. This is the case of many initiatives which make every effort to reach such groups without always securing the means to do so. In order to succeed, support from the local community for any education and training project is essential. Different studies have demonstrated that the most educated people are those most likely to sign up for lifelong learning. Kjell Rubenson thus warns against excessive support for the idea that individuals should take full responsibility for their own future in this respect as, far from enriching knowledge in particular communities, it might lead to the 'lifelong inequality' of their citizens and multi-track development.

Assuming that the national, regional, local and European public authorities have a part to play in regulating and coordinating activity, what kind of environment should they provide for in order to ensure maximum development of people's skills potential? What kind of action is needed for firms to develop ways of working which ensure that the skills and knowledge acquired are used? A skill that is learnt and not applied is rapidly blunted. In seeking to establish an education and training policy for all, should one be concerned with a single monolithic approach or, on the contrary, a wide range of policies that are distinctively varied in accordance with different target groups and, in particular, the most vulnerable?

(3) Kjell Rubenson is a Professor and Director of the Higher Education and Training Policy Studies Centre at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada) and Adjunct Professor at the University of Linköping.

Separate studies have pointed to the ineffectiveness of general measures in improving the access of the most vulnerable groups to schemes for lifelong education and training. Resources made available both by formal systems and by firms tend to be appropriated by those who, at the outset, are the most privileged in terms of achievements and qualifications. Under these circumstances, there is increasing interest in informal learning contexts, for which little reliable information or analyses have been circulated or received much attention. Whatever the future turn of events here, this should not be a reason for minimising the role of public policy. In the view of Kjell Rubenson, this should be redefined with regard to a fresh set of assumptions. Clearly, firms do now make a central contribution to adult education and training, and it is well known how personal education and training at the workplace have a reciprocal impact on each other.

Readers are encouraged to consider the following chapters in the light of the foregoing discussion which is intended to promote further thinking and debate.

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KEY MESSAGE 1: NEW BASIC SKILLS FOR ALL

European Commission *Memorandum* on lifelong learning

In order to gain and renew the skills needed for participation in the knowledge society, everyone should be guaranteed permanent access to learning.

The Lisbon Summit identified new basic skills in its specific reference to proficiency in information technology, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills (such as self-confidence, self-direction and risk-taking). Learning how to learn is another basic and no less important skill, enabling people to adapt to change and secure benefit from what have become vast information flows. Proficiency in these areas, which calls for a sound grasp of the basic skills of writing, reading and arithmetic, is the key to vast areas of interdisciplinary learning and knowledge.

If the possession of basic skills represents the beginning of what should be a continuous process, those who have been unable to acquire them at the outset, should be given a second chance to do so.

If insufficient or inappropriate knowledge is no longer to lead to high levels of unemployment, ever-changing labour markets presuppose that every individual should easily be able to acquire fresh knowledge and update what has already been learnt at any stage in life.

Summary

EU cooperation has been especially active in the field of information and communication technology (ICT). The eLearning initiative, the Netd@ys and the 'computer driving licence' are selected illustrations of this.

The definition of basic skills varies from one system to the next. While some people attach importance to ICT, foreign languages, learning to learn, etc., others are more concerned with literacy, numeracy and ICT. Yet others focus on interdisciplinary content (the environment, citizenship, etc.) for fostering expertise and attitudes. In all cases, associations with the reality of everyday life are increasingly apparent.

Far from doing no more than accommodate new basic skills, the structures underlying education are changing as entire curricula are reconsidered. Whole sections of systems, if not systems themselves, are undergoing thorough reform. The result of gradually more integrated approaches is that arrangements for guidance, support and identification of skills needed by the labour market, in cooperation with the social partners, are highly significant aspects of curricular provision.

While the outcome of these developments for general education and vocational training differs in accordance with the different aims of both, both are changing and sometimes concurrently.

Actions at European level

The European Union had made strides in promoting basic skills even before the Lisbon Summit, which has given new impetus to its efforts and those of the Member States. A series of initiatives have been taken by the European Union especially for the purpose of promoting digital literacy and the use of new technologies.

The **eLearning initiative** for instance is designed to enable Europe increase the use of ICT and intensify its efforts in this direction. The initiative has four components: to equip schools with multimedia computers; to train European teachers in digital technologies; to develop European educational services and software; and to speed up the networking of schools and teachers. Most of the resources to be mobilised for the eLearning initiative are national but they should be backed by the development of partnerships between public authorities and industry, as well as by all the adequate Community instruments such as the education, training and youth programmes for innovative actions and exchange of good practice, the Structural Funds, and the IST ([4]) to support research and promote European digital contents.

Netd@ys Europe is a strategic initiative of the European Commission to promote the use of new media in education and culture, and to provide participants with the opportunity to develop skills, and to acquire and exchange information on a range of subjects. The initiative culminates in a showcase week with on-line and off-line events all around Europe and beyond. Netd@ys was launched for the first time in 1997 within the framework of the European Commission Action Plan *Learning in the information society* (1996–98). It focuses mainly on schools and other types of organisations which want to raise awareness of, and exchange their experiences of using new media as a tool for enhancing teaching and learning. The projects participating in Netd@ys can also be local, regional or national, but in order to be funded by the European Commission they must have a European dimension through involving different partners (public organisations, schools and enterprises) from at least three different countries. Netd@ays 2000 pursued a series of priority objectives in Europe to help citizens acquire the necessary skills to participate actively in the information society, to remove barriers to learning, to ensure equality of access for people of all ages and backgrounds, including those who live in disadvantaged or isolated areas and those with special needs, and to strengthen and expand the links between education and culture.

The **Career-Space** project was launched by seven major ICT companies in Europe – IBM Europe, Nokia Telecommunications, Philips Semiconductors, Thomson CSF, Siemens AG, Microsoft Europe, and British Telecommunications Plc – and with the support of the European Commission in order to explore new ways of addressing the skills gaps and mismatch arising from the development of the knowledge society. In fact, this pilot project is an attempt to tackle

([4]) Information Society Technologies Programme, a major theme of research and technological development within the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Community for Research and Technological Development (RTD) (1998-2002).

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the skills crisis in Europe by putting in place a clear framework for students, education and training institutions and governments, that describes precisely the skills and competencies required by the ICT industry in Europe. Its main goals are to attract more students into ICT courses and employment by providing attractive, plain language profiles of the jobs, roles and opportunities in the industry today, to provide higher education ICT curriculum designers with clear up-to-date and easily accessible information on the skills needed by the industry and, finally, to assist governments in developing policies to foster the growth of ICT skills in Europe.

To achieve these goals, the sponsor companies of the project have first of all developed *Generic Job Profiles* relevant to their main activities and created a website for this purpose. The *Generic Job Profiles* refer to the different types of people that the ICT industry needs, such as technical people, project managers, consultants, salesmen, educators etc., as well as to the personal characteristics that these people need to have, such as creativity, communications skills and a liking for science and mathematics. The website is updated on a regular basis and expanded in order to provide information about skills requirements, job opportunities and latest developments in the industry. Although the initial work concentrated on profiles at the cutting edge of the high tech sector, the aim is to continue the work at all levels and in all sectors, as computers and ICT specialists are needed across the broad spectrum of industries and services today.

The European Commission's ***New Strategy on Building new European Labour Markets by 2005*** announced the establishment of a high-level skills and mobility Taskforce, in April 2001, to identify the main drivers and characteristics of the new European labour market, with a particular focus on skills, lifelong learning and mobility. On the basis of its report to be delivered in December 2001, the Commission will put forward an Action Plan to the Spring Council of 2002.

The **European Computer Driving Licence** (ECDL) was launched for the first time in August 1996, in Sweden. The original concept however belongs to Finland where the Finnish Association for Information Processing introduced the Finnish Computer Driving Licence in 1994. The ECDL set out to be the European standard for information technology (IT) skills and the ambition now is to be the Global Standard for IT skills. It is aimed at raising the level of knowledge about IT, and the level of competence in using personal computers and common computer applications for all citizens within Europe and internationally; increasing the productivity of employees who use computers in their work; enabling better returns from investments in IT; and finally providing a basic qualification which will allow all people to be part of the Information Society. ECDL consists of seven modules and when a candidate registers to start the certification process (s)he receives a European Computer Skills Card on which the process through the seven tests is recorded. When all seven modules are completed, the candidate receives the European Computer Driving Licence. The ECDL is being implemented in 22 European Countries and it has had a considerable impact in all of them, especially in the Nordic Countries where it is proving to be a very popular certification among employers and employees. In many countries, social outreach programmes are using the ECDL as a means of certifying the skill level achieved by socially disadvantaged people. Furthermore, the ECDL Foundation is examining the requirements for making the test available on an equal basis to people with a range of physical disabilities.

1.1 Defining new basic skills and providing universal access to them

Summary

Among basic skills now frequently included in curricula are oral and written communication, literacy, numeracy, teamwork, ICT, problem-solving and foreign language teaching.

Initiatives are also concerned with the establishment and clarification of objectives and target standard levels in clearly identified basic subjects.

Interdisciplinary subjects, such as education and citizenship or the human dimension of work, and project activity, etc., are also included in compulsory education curricula.

Sometimes fundamental changes are in the process of affecting the structure of systems from compulsory education to continuing vocational training, without forgetting upper secondary and higher education too. New branches are being introduced while others are being modernised, and entire stages of education redefined.

Such developments are encouraging a greater variety of options, more individual study pathways, practical placements (in firms), increasingly modular courses, partnerships with the social partners and representatives of civil society and professionally-oriented education and training (as in the case of university higher education).

On occasions, these reforms have led to the implementation of fully integrated arrangements linking education, training, guidance and skills validation, etc. all geared to the development of the local economy, in partnership with firms, professions and the social partners.

In the past decade, curriculum changes and reforms in VET have been introduced in many European countries. These changes have addressed the questions of skills and competence and the balance between generic and social skills and specific skills. A number of Member States have completely overhauled their VET systems and replaced them with competence-based systems. Such core curricula often try to find the right mix between general education subjects, generic skills, and specific or technical skills for a particular occupation or job. This is seen as part of the provision of a wide foundation for lifelong learning in initial education and training and, in particular, a broad skills base on which to develop one's career and employability.

New learning environments are being promoted which encourage self-directed learning. This will be achieved through enhanced individual learning pathways, flexibility and modularised structures which will allow accreditation of smaller programme sequences, thus enabling students to change track. Formulation of a personal education plan contributes to meeting individual learning needs and to developing personal competences. Plans are initiated by the school or training centres, typically by the 'contact teacher', and the training company is required to participate in the formulation and revision of the education plan. Students are offered the possibility to achieve a double or partial qualification.

Basic skills in programmes

- In Belgium, the Flemish Community defines **'learning to learn'** as a cross-curricular theme that is part of the curriculum in primary and secondary education. Importance is also attached to encouraging each citizen to adopt positive attitudes vis-à-vis learning in general and, more particularly, lifelong learning. In this respect, special attention is devoted to less privileged groups. The Flemish Community is also emphasising the need to provide for the acquisition of basic skills in courses at all levels of education.

  The French Community has based its curricula on the previously identified **core skills**. The computer network has been extended to virtually all schools (the cyber-school network). Training in the new technologies is provided in all kinds of public-sector school (Community, provincial and municipal) and staff training sessions are arranged in schools on Wednesday afternoons. Experimental linguistic immersion is organised in pre-primary, primary and secondary education.

  Furthermore, a decree of December 2000 gives assent to the 4 July 2000 cooperation agreement between the French Community and the Region of Wallonia regarding **linguistic immersion** programmes. Under the terms of the agreement, the Region of Wallonia will award a grant to the programmes, with 75% of the allocation for secondary education and 25% for higher education. In the case of secondary education, the money is for any action designed to encourage immersion-based language learning for schools exercising positive discrimination.

- In Spain, the **curriculum for compulsory education** defines education as something more than simple instruction. Its content is not only concerned with concepts but with **procedures, expertise** and **attitudes** which embody standards and values. Education in values begins with a set of horizontal subjects or principles which take account of areas that were previously self-contained and compartmentalised. The teaching concerned focuses on moral and civic conduct, peace, gender equality, the environment, health, sex education and road safety, as well as consumer education. Subjects are selected for their relevance beyond the confines of schooling, to become part of an approach to teaching which combats discrimination and inequality.

  Attaching considerable importance to language learning, Spain has started several initiatives in this field. **Official language schools** exist throughout the country and their courses are for all citizens who have completed compulsory education. The centres offer Spanish-language courses for foreigners, as well as courses in other official languages spoken throughout Spain (including Catalan, Basque, Galician and Valencian) and various foreign languages (among them German, Arabic, Chinese, Danish, French, Greek, English, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, Portuguese, Romanian and Russian). Courses are divided into two (lower and upper) stages and may, in either case, be given in the public sector (in the above-mentioned official schools) or in the private sector, provided that annual examinations are organised for assessment purposes. The government determines the minimum

content of courses. At the end of the lower stage, after passing the corresponding examination, pupils receive a certificate formally confirming that they have achieved the stated objectives. The general aims of this stage are to give pupils a basic set of skills for expressing themselves in and understanding the language concerned, both orally and in writing. Learners should be capable of using the language for communication purposes in daily situations. They should also be aware of cultural aspects which are specific to the one or more countries in which the language is spoken and liable to condition the most commonly encountered social situations. The main aim of the upper stage is to develop the creative ability of pupils in use of the language to the point at which they acquire greater flexibility and capacity for refinement in understanding and expressing themselves in it.

That's English! is an official distance education programme for learning English, which began in the 1993/94 academic year. It may be followed by students aged over 18, and is the only distance education language learning programme which leads to an official certificate. There are plans to launch a similar programme for the teaching of French.

- In order to achieve effective integration of ICT within its education system, France has ensured that, from now on, **use of ICT in all subject areas will be included in new *collège* curricula**. From the forthcoming school year, skills acquired by all final-year *collège* pupils (some 1.2 million in 2000 and 2001) in the use of multimedia tools will be tested for the award of a new *brevet informatique* (computer science certificate). As part of *lycée* reform, teaching of ICT has been included in courses for first-year *lycée* pupils since 1999, while use of these technologies is being gradually introduced into courses in French, physics with chemistry, and earth and life sciences.

- In Greece, **courses in local history** and **environmental education** have been initiated in primary and secondary schools. The *Melina* programme, an introduction to the study of Greek history and culture, is to be extended to all primary and lower secondary schools. Within the same programme, new teaching methods using the arts as a vehicle for basic education, will be included.

  Arrangements have been made to offer **Greek-language tuition to immigrants** working in the country. The aims of this provision are to further their linguistic and cultural integration, encourage their personal development, and help them to become more involved in Greek daily life, including its socio-economic, political and cultural aspects, and to overcome problems related to communication and integration in general.

  Adult education also focuses on the **basic skills required for social and professional development**. Action in this area is concerned with education for active citizenship (basic social and economic skills, health and consumer education, human rights and European citizenship, etc.), and the development of individual skills (in speaking and writing, group work, self-confidence, etc.) and technical skills (using the Internet and electronic communications, including multimedia, etc.). Courses are also being developed in environmental education, as well as the education of parents so that they they follow their children's progress at

school more effectively and are better informed about the aims of the curriculum and legislative developments, etc.

Specific initiatives are targeted at women to help them enter the labour market.

- In Ireland, **programmes have been completely overhauled**, with new programmes introduced to boost relevance and broaden the range of options. They include the *Junior Cycle Schools Programme* for lower secondary education, a *Transition Year Option*, a Leaving Certificate (Vocational Programme) which is awarded on satisfactory completion of a two-year course in upper secondary education and gives access to professional life or further study, and the 'Leaving Certificate Applied', which is a variant of the preceding qualification. These reforms involve an increase in language, technical and vocational options and a work experience programme, as well as the inclusion of ICT in teaching and learning. They are particularly concerned with personal development, human relations skills, teamwork, a sense of initiative, problem-solving, critical ability and the capacity to learn independently. A school/industry liaison programme has also been started in cooperation with national employers.

- In Italy, the **new curricula for basic school have been fully updated.** (5) They now formally list so-called 'new basic skills' that pupils have to learn at each successive stage of their 7-year course and should have mastered on its completion.

- In Luxembourg, **courses for learning the three official administrative languages** (German, French, and Letzeburgesch), as well as English and Spanish, are booming. The department for adult education is thus stepping up provision to meet the growing demand. It is also involved in initial and in-service training projects for adult education course supervisors and in developing a method of teaching Letzeburgesch to adults (comprising the publication of learning booklets, an electronic spell check on the Internet and a TV/video learning programme).

- Austria is involved in the **DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies) – Programme**, initiated by the Swiss Federal Office for Statistics in 1998 under OECD auspices. The DeSeCo is concerned with the theoretical basis for key competencies, a framework for the development of indicators and interpretation of empirical data, and alternation between conceptual and empirical work. The interdisciplinary and internationally-oriented approach of the Programme has resulted in initial consensus as to the importance of the following: (a) the ability to act autonomously and purposefully; (b) the efficient use of tools such as languages, knowledge, and technologies; and (c) the integration of heterogeneous social groups.

(5) The future of this reform will depend on decisions to be taken by the new (Berlusconi) government which was in the process of being constituted when we went to press.

- In Portugal, Statutory Order 6 for **reorganisation of the curriculum of *ensino básico*** ('basic education' corresponding to primary and lower secondary education in other systems) was published in January 2001. It seeks to guarantee basic education for all, while promoting work to clarify requirements with regard to basic learning and the way this should occur. In addition to conventional subject areas, the new curriculum contains interdisciplinary courses on education for citizenship, the human dimension of work and the use of ICT, which normally lead to the award of a basic skills certificate. The secondary education curriculum has also been revised (Statutory Order 7, 2001) to encourage closer links between education, training and society, and to facilitate transition to the labour market. New arrangements now determine the significance of project work in general courses, and technological projects in technological courses. The arrangements further provide for mobility between technological and general courses, as well as between courses offered by the Ministries of Education and Labour. This freedom to move away from a strictly theoretical subject approach is meant to develop a global view of knowledge and the relation between theory and practice. Courses also involve education for citizenship, activities to promote the Portuguese language, attempts to increase awareness of the human dimension of work, guidance and counselling to boost mobility across the different paths through secondary education, and interdisciplinary-oriented training in the use of ICT. There is thus a flexible framework for the enrichment of courses.

  In April 2001, a special diploma in basic ICT skills was approved by Statutory Order, for the purpose of accrediting such skills and formally acknowledging their contribution to full awareness and exercise of citizenship.

  In addition, the purpose of the **National System for Vocational Certification** is to ensure the free movement of workers in the European Union and boost employability by means of transparent qualifications. The System also seeks to gear vocational training to acquisition of the necessary qualifications and encourage new forms of work organisation. The Permanent Committee for Certification and the Specialised Technical Committees are tripartite, thereby ensuring close links with the world of work. Established for each occupational sector, the Specialised Technical Committees have the task of devising appropriate job/skills profiles, drawing up standards of certification, analysing training provision in the sector concerned and making recommendations thereon.

- In the United Kingdom, the Scottish Executive has set **objectives for schools in four key areas**: literacy, numeracy, examination attendance and classroom attendance. The command of core skills such as working with others, problem-solving, numeracy, written and oral communication and ICT is regarded as fundamental for the continuation of education and training. This approach is sustained by the **National Qualifications programme**. Core Skills are embedded in many of the National Qualifications allowing students to gain the skills automatically. Core skills are also available as separate qualifications, enabling students to gain a qualification in skills that they may not already have.

In the area of ICT, the skills drive has been closely associated with moves towards the Information Society and the needs of a knowledge economy. A recent publication by the OECD

(2000), *Learning to Bridge the Digital Divide*, presents an analysis of the learning digital divide as it has developed or is developing in different countries, and the policies and innovation designed to overcome it. It provides evidence that *ICT can be the solution to inequalities rather than their cause.*

Efforts in this field are currently progressing in all European countries. (*) The initiatives taken by European governments largely focus on improving the number of computers in schools, the availability of software and access to the Internet. Some countries offer several financial facilities also for individuals in order to increase the number of personal computers. For instance, the Italian Parliament, through the Financial Law for 2000-2001, is offering citizens an opportunity to discover the new technologies by creating a **Euro credit card** for the new economy. According to this law, anyone who had reached the age of 18 by 1 January 2001, can apply for this credit card to purchase goods and services in the computer and telecommunications sector, as well as to follow distance learning courses, to a maximum value of EUR 5 164. In substance, it is a loan – citizens will in fact be required to refund the sum without interest – which the State, in the name of the new economy, will guarantee in the event of insolvency. In Sweden, a high level of computer literacy already exists at both youth and adult level and this is helped by tax breaks for the use of computers at home, and following the introduction of a new national time schedule in schools. There is no special allocation for computer science as a subject; instead, computers are used as a tool in all subjects.

The revision of content, curricular organisation and systems

An emphasis on new basic skills is occurring, together with the adjustment of curricula and, in some cases, of systems.

- In Belgium, the *Dienst Beroepsopleiding Departement Onderwijs* (the department of education vocational training service) in the Flemish Community is making every effort to enhance **the development of close working relations between initial and in-service vocational training, on the one hand, and the labour market on the other**. A reform of training patterns, models of organisation and more effective counselling for the various branches of training on offer is under way. Training opportunities for learners are being increased so that there is more chance of them obtaining a qualification. The different sections of vocational training courses are broken down into modules. Each module corresponds to a partial qualification so that learners become more motivated to complete the entire course and to continue learning throughout life. The content of modules is inspired by job descriptions supplied by the social partners.

- Denmark is implementing **a major reform of the vocational education and continuing training system**. Education programmes at advanced levels are being given the same

(*) For a broader overview of ongoing initiatives, readers should consult the Eurydice survey on ICT in education published in August 2001.

recognition as comparable levels of education in the mainstream system. It is a condition for embarking on an adult education programme at one of these advanced levels that participants have a relevant educational background and at least two years of relevant work experience. The organisation of the content and teaching methods are to a large extent based on the professional and personal experience of the adults concerned. Attendance at courses is compatible with continued professional activity since they are organised outside working hours. Under this reform of the adult education system, around EUR 6.7 million (DKK 50 million) have been committed for 2000/2001 in order to fund university projects. The idea is to encourage universities to develop new qualifications, including special Master's level degrees, as well as modular courses and pilot projects involving new skills units, with the aim of diversifying the qualifications and Master's courses on offer in accordance with demand.

- In Spain, **orthodox and special arrangements** have been introduced as part of a policy for lifelong education. The aim is to try and cater for the needs of all pupils by means of an open and flexible kind of course responsive to their differences. Pathways on offer involve anything from a gradual increase in optional subjects throughout this stage to actual changes in course content, and the possibility of including more diversified provision in the final phase of this stage. The purpose of this last kind of measure is to gear provision to the varied needs and interests of pupils. The course is thus structured to include optional subjects that become increasingly significant throughout compulsory secondary education. There is a similar attempt to diversify methodology, the teaching materials used and the way in which elements of content are linked and structured. When, notwithstanding such adjustments, pupils fail to achieve the general aims set for this stage, further efforts are made to diversify. In this case, a new smaller group of pupils is formed and relevant changes are introduced in the curriculum (focusing on the fields of socio-linguistics, science and technology).

  In upper secondary education, *bachillerato* students may choose one of four optional subjects in accordance with their abilities and their academic and professional interests. In vocational secondary education, one of the main priorities is that pupils should develop a sense of identity and professional maturity motivating them to consider fresh phases of learning and enabling them to adapt to any changes in skills requirements. Alongside the general measures already referred to, other specific developments have been encouraged, such as increasingly close links between schools and firms as complementary centres for learning. In higher education, a broadening in the number of subjects on offer is helping people to satisfy their specific lifelong education requirements. Meanwhile, specialised vocational provision with clear employment prospects has been expanded for the benefit of students who have obtained first university degrees, as well as other graduates, in order to increase the likelihood that they will be able to apply what they have learnt at university to their professional activity. And an extensive range of distance university courses may also be accessed at the National University for Distance Education (UNED). Students enrolled at this University accounted for 8% of all university students in the 1996/97 school year. Special university provision is available for retired people.

- In France, the **fight against illiteracy** is now bolstered from pre-primary level onwards and throughout the whole of schooling by means of innovative teaching practice, including the use of ICT; young people with learning difficulties receive individual support at *collège* stage, at which experiments are also being conducted with combined interdisciplinary work.

  The **programme to promote modern languages in school and university** has also been launched. Modern languages, including the native languages and cultures of many pupils (Arabic, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese) and geographically 'close' regional languages, have been introduced in pre-primary school at which learning is predominantly oral. Since September 2000, these languages have been taught as subjects in their own right in the final year of primary school. In the next five years, teaching of them will be gradually extended throughout the whole of primary education. This will involve linguistic and special pedagogical training for all teachers and future teachers at this level, together with a multiannual plan for in-service training in each department, an increase in the number of posts for language teaching assistants (1 850 at the start of the 2001/2002 school year), the development of multimedia teaching tools and the provision of linguistic classes.

  A plan to reform the teaching of science and technology in primary school sets out to encourage young people to study science, by promoting a culture of experimental interdisciplinary learning based on *la main à la pâte*, the 'hands-on' learning initiative of Nobel laureate Georges Charpak. The underlying aim is to stimulate the ability of pupils to reason and argue soundly.

  Initial vocational training is being gradually readapted to become part of a strategy for lifelong education. Assessment, certification procedures, and vocational qualifications are to be overhauled, particularly in the service sector, in order to take account of technological change and changes in work organisation. In 2001, the *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP, or Certificate of Vocational Aptitude), the initial basic vocational qualification, is being reformed with support from the social partners (length of in-company training, procedures for accessing training, and certification and training content). Opportunities to move from one kind of course to another are being introduced to facilitate enrolment for both initial and in-service training. Introduced in 80% of the 1 770 vocational *lycées* in 2001, multidisciplinary schemes of a vocational nature are being fully extended in 2001 to make pupils more aware of the interaction between general and vocational subjects in developing vocational qualifications. Links with the world of business and industry are being further reinforced through partnership agreements with particular vocational sectors or big firms, and the *Ingénieurs pour l'école* ('Engineers for School') scheme aimed at getting 80 managers and engineers from major companies to prepare young people for their entry into professional life.

  The French government is also concerned to **strengthen the vocational dimension of courses in higher education**. There is provision for vocational training in the university institutes of technology, the 'higher technician' sections, the vocational university institutes

and the engineering schools. In-company placements are included in general courses in literature and science. A ***licence professionnelle*** (vocational degree) has recently been introduced (with effect from the 2000/2001 academic year) in order to facilitate entry to the labour market. Its courses last for a year (subject to any special educational provisions) and combine theoretical and final-stage practical components with learning about methods and tools, and training placements in firms or other occupational environments. Given as part of initial and in-service training, courses are based on an integrated approach involving both training institutions and the professional sectors concerned. A variety of training pathways have been devised to take account of the specific qualifications and needs of students from different backgrounds. The *licence professionnelle* is awarded by universities, independently or in conjunction with other public bodies for higher education which have been formally recognised for this purpose by the minister of higher education.

- In Italy, the new structure of the education system (under the Law of 10 February 2000) (*) **redefines the various stages of education** with a view to the development of lifelong education. Continuity within the system from provision for the earliest years of childhood onwards is a central underlying principle. Each stage is linked to the stages which precede and follow it in terms of both content and learning methods, so as to develop, broaden and build on what has been already acquired and to prepare for what is to come.

  Pre-primary education seeks to develop children's capacity for self-sufficiency, creativity and learning, while also laying the groundwork for their comprehensive education. Primary education is concerned with the following: developing and consolidating children's basic knowledge and skills, with reference to the most recent theories regarding social, cultural and scientific change in our societies; teaching them new forms of self-expression; enhancing their capacity for social relations and development conditioned by the factors of time and space; familiarising them with the basic principles of human society; and developing their ability to choose and take personal decisions.

  The ultimate aims of secondary education are as follows: to consolidate, reorganise and extend the ability and skills acquired by young people during primary education; to support and develop the attitudes and ambitions of students; and to enrich their personal growth through education with a cultural, human and civic dimension, while gradually furthering their capacity to assume responsibility. This level of education is also meant to facilitate access to university and non-university higher education, or entry to the labour market.

  The priorities of adult education are to define a blueprint for planning and management of a new system at national, regional and local levels. The development of local pilot projects

(*) The future of this reform will depend on decisions to be taken by the new (Berlusconi) government which was in the process of being constituted when we went to press.

should facilitate the transfer of particular models. It is proposed to restructure area centres for adult education so as to improve their planning, management and provision for this sector.

New measures have also been adopted **to achieve more effective coordination** of policies and practice in the fields of education, training and employment and **to facilitate the transition from school to work.** In-company placements and practical work have been introduced at all levels of education, except the basic level. More specifically, arrangements adopted within the school system are either in the form of long and short placements for guidance and training purposes which are organised from the start of secondary education or, alternatively, pathways for acquiring vocational skills at the end of upper secondary education.

An entirely **new branch of post-secondary provision**, called ***Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore*** (IFTS, or 'higher technical education and training') has been established. This is a coordinated structured system bringing together the different sectors of post-secondary school and university education, vocational training and the world of work, as a result of which:

- young graduates can acquire more advanced skills corresponding to the needs of professional life, in order to speed up their entry to the labour market and make it easier for them to continue their studies in accordance with patterns of training which follow on from those already completed;
- working adults can upgrade and secure formal recognition for their professional skills and experience, in order to enhance their right to lifelong education, as well as their prospects for mobility and professional enrichment;
- adults without work or officially unemployed can envisage fresh opportunities for employment as salaried workers or self-employed people.

IFTS provision is administered by a mixed membership body (a consortium or other type of association) that has to include at least four kinds of player, namely a higher state school institution, an organisation or centre for vocational training, a university and one or several firms or associations of firms. IFTS courses display the following general features:

- the formal establishment of a scientific and technical project committee which must include representatives of the IFTS partners and heads of firms, who are responsible for initially devising the project, monitoring its progress and provisionally certifying it;
- introduction of a cumulative credit system which lasts up to the completion of IFTS, and is based on regionally adapted national guidelines.

In Italy, in which compulsory education lasts until the age of 15, a 1999 law now obliges young people aged 15-18 to pursue education and/or training activities within the school or vocational training systems, or in apprenticeship. The most prominent feature of this innovation, known as the *obbligo formativo*, is that they can attend *integrated education and vocational courses* in school, enabling them to obtain both a diploma and a vocational qualification.

- Portugal is striving to achieve **more effective coordination of policies and practice** in the field of education, training and employment, and **introducing greater flexibility and variety** into its secondary school curricula. It has set up permanent observatories for basic and upper secondary education, as well as arrangements for monitoring the subsequent career paths of higher education graduates, so that it is easier to guide policy implementation. Flexibility and variety are also the aims, in higher education and training, of new integrated courses (combining modules concerned with key skills, general education, preliminary training and vocational training) and new kinds of certification which, at one and the same time, offer formal recognition of school equivalence levels and vocational qualifications. The Vocational Training and Employment Observatory is monitoring both the quantitative and qualitative development of employment. The tripartite *Comissão Nacional de Aprendizagem* (National Commission for Apprenticeship) guides and monitors training for young people in accordance with arrangements for linked work and training and the remit of the *Comissão de Acompanhamento dos Cursos de Educação e Formação Inicial* (Commission for Measures to support Education and Initial Training).

- In the United Kingdom, the **foundation stage of education** was introduced in England in September 2000. This caters for children from the age of 3 until the end of the reception class (when they are usually aged 5). It is a distinct stage of education, which is considered to be important in its own right, as well as for the role it plays in preparing children for later schooling. Early learning goals were introduced in September 2000, following a review (commissioned by the government) of the desirable learning outcomes by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). This **new curriculum guidance** is an integral part of the foundation stage and includes goals which are in line with the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The goals are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development (QCA, 2000). In Wales, the same six areas of learning form the basis of curricular guidance for the foundation stage. Known as the desirable learning outcomes, these have recently been redefined by the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) to reflect the Welsh context and the revised National Curriculum in Wales.

  For **secondary education**, the government has recently announced that foundation and intermediate-level General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and Part One GNVQs will begin to be replaced by **new vocational General Certificates of Secondary Education** (GCSEs) from September 2002. Vocational GCSEs will be available in a similar broad range of vocational subject areas to the Part One GNVQ, including manufacturing, art and design, information technology, health and social care, and engineering. Their aim will be to provide an introduction to a vocational subject area, and to enable young people who obtain a vocational GCSE to move on to apprenticeships and into jobs. The government expects that vocational GCSEs will be taken by pupils aged 14-16 in compulsory education, but also by 16- to 19-year-old students in college or school education, wishing to study a vocational course below advanced level.

The **structure of General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) and General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) examinations has recently been reviewed with the aim of broadening the subjects studied in the first year of the course.** As a result, since September 2000, pupils have been encouraged to study up to five subjects in the first year of the sixth form. On successful completion, they are awarded the new GCE AS qualification. They then go on to study up to three of these five AS qualification subjects at GCE A-level in the second year. To facilitate this process, GCE A-level and GCE AS qualification courses consist of units – six for the full A-level and three for the GCE AS qualification, and pupils select either modular or end-of-course assessment. They are free to choose any combination of A-level and/or AS qualifications within the limitation of a school's timetable and the range of subjects it offers. The first examinations for the new GCE AS qualification are taking place in summer 2001, and those for the revised GCE A-level in summer 2002.

Since September 2000, **a new voluntary 'key skills' qualification in communication, application of number, and information technology** has been available to **pupils aged 16 or over** in post-compulsory secondary education. This qualification is meant to be taken in tandem with other courses and is consequently available for all pupils, whether they are following GCE A-level, GCE AS qualification, GNVQ, or GCSE courses in schools or colleges. It is also available for post-16 students participating in work-based training programmes. In addition to the specific key skills qualification, the government recommends that all post-16 programmes (GCE A-levels, GNVQs etc.) should incorporate aspects of all six key skills (application of number, communication, information technology, improving one's own learning and performance, problem-solving, and working with others).

Deliberate efforts to encourage young people aged over 16 to continue their education or training supplement action to achieve the performance levels and standards expected of schools. Initiatives in this area include a major scheme for educational improvement with, for example, **the establishment of targets for schools and local authorities responsible for education**, along with strategies to improve literacy and numeracy.

For higher education, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) is currently proposing to introduce a new two-year vocational qualification, the *Foundation Degree*. It is envisaged that *foundation degree* graduates will provide the labour market with the intermediate-level skills which are currently in short supply. Foundation degrees are also intended to appeal to a broader range of potential students, thus widening participation in higher education and stimulating lifelong learning. Key features of the proposed foundation degree are employer involvement, the development of skills and knowledge, application of skills in the workplace, the possibility to accumulate and transfer credit and the possibility to progress to an honours degree. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is currently asking higher education and further education institutions to bid for funding to develop prototype foundation degrees and deliver them in the academic year 2001/2002.

For **further and adult education**, a major development in lifelong learning in England is **the creation of the Learning and Skills Council**. The LSC was created by the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and brings together for the first time into a single national body, responsibility for planning and funding of post-16 learning (other than higher education) in England. The LSC became operational in April 2001. As well as the national Council, local LSCs have been created and will be responsible for ensuring that the needs of local communities, businesses and individuals are reflected and met through LSC-funded provision, and for delivering the national priorities and policies at local level. Business and industry will have considerable influence in the Council. Forty per cent of LSC Board members and local chairs have substantial recent business or commercial experience. Through business involvement, it is intended that the system will be better able to train people suited to business needs. The LSC will be responsible for around EUR 9 800 million (GBP 6 billion including school sixth-form funding) and almost 6 million learners.

In Wales, the **National Council for Education and Training** (CETW) became operational on 1 April 2001. Its duties are similar to the LSC in England. The CETW and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales have established a joint executive to ensure a coordinated approach to the funding of all post-16 institutions in Wales. This joint body is known as Education and Learning Wales (ELWA).

In Northern Ireland, a **Strategic Investment fund** has been introduced to enable the further education sector to better support local and regional economic development. Funds are available to provide for the following: the restructuring of institutions; the sharing of expertise and resources; the direction of resources to areas of identified skills needs; the merger of government training centres with further education colleges; and the establishment of regional centres of excellence in vocational areas of major significance to the regional economy.

▶ In 1998, in **Iceland**, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture launched a new school policy for primary and upper secondary levels. This policy essentially represents an attempt to create an **efficient but flexible education system** which focuses on the needs of individual students, broadens the choices open to them and encourages them to assume responsibility for their studies, while also instilling academic discipline, good working skills and healthy competition.

The **principal changes** in **compulsory education** introduced by the new National Curriculum are as follows: instruction in English now begins in the 5th grade, or at 10 years of age; a new subject is offered to teach skills generally required in the world of today; and more goal-oriented teaching of information technology is provided. Pupils can choose whether or not they take the nationally coordinated examinations on completion of compulsory education.

The National Curriculum Guidelines state that, from 1999 onwards, there will be various course options in the last year of compulsory schooling which individual pupils, their par-

ents and teachers may determine jointly with a view to obtaining the best educational solution for the pupil concerned.

In grades 9 and 10, schools are expected to organise up to 30% of their total time on their own initiative and offer pupils a significant choice of subjects and fields of study. The aim of this greater freedom is to enable them to adjust provision to their personal requirements, and draw attention to their preferred areas of study and how they would like to map out their future with their parents, teachers and educational counsellors. This has three consequences. First, the notion of basic public education is retained, as is demonstrated by the inclusion of core subjects (Icelandic and mathematics) and by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science timetable guidelines. Secondly, pupils have a chance, through their optional subjects, to concentrate on those which match their interests and plans for the future. Thirdly, they are allowed to drop subjects or fields of study in which they are not interested, or which they consider to be less relevant to their career plans.

Optional subjects in grades 9 and 10 may be divided into three main groups. The first group prepares pupils systematically for the secondary school curriculum. The second is concerned with preparation for a particular career, or for further education in the arts or technology. The third group corresponds to subjects which pupils may select to broaden their horizons or enrich their lives. One result of different options is that pupils will no longer be required to take the same nationally coordinated examinations on completion of compulsory education, as they will be following different courses for different purposes.

All pupils who have completed compulsory education have the legal right to upper secondary education regardless of their results in the 10th grade of compulsory school. However, the 1996 Upper Secondary School Act provides for varied entrance requirements for different branches of study at upper secondary level corresponding to the academic demands of the branch concerned. A recently issued regulation regarding this legislative provision comes into effect from the 2001/2002 school year. According to the 1996 legislation, the aim is to promote the general development of all pupils so as to maximise their chances of active participation in a democratic society. Besides preparing them for work or further study, upper secondary schooling is meant to promote their sense of responsibility, broad-mindedness, initiative, self-confidence and tolerance and to train them to think and study in a disciplined but critical way. Schools are also meant to heighten the responsiveness of pupils to cultural values and encourage them to seek knowledge for the rest of their lives.

Finally, secondary schools and universities increasingly offer continuing education and distance teaching.

As far as vocational training specifically is concerned, various models have been proposed in Europe for adaptation of content and curricula. Two main approaches can be identified:

- the *approach promoting basic, generic and core skills* is characteristic of the debate in English-speaking countries, but it is also seen in certain other countries, although to a less sig-

nificant extent (Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Finland). The skills whose acquisition is promoted in this approach are the general elementary and/or cognitive competences required for a whole series of jobs, indeed all jobs: mathematics, reading, writing, problem-solving, social, communication and interpersonal competences. They are entry skills to gainful work and employment as well as skills necessary for social participation (citizenship);

- the *approach promoting transferable (key) competences and broad professional competence* (dominating for example in Denmark, Germany, Italy and Austria) is based on a collection of competences transcending divisions of labour and traditional occupational profiles. The competences cited are social and communication competences, and strategic efficiency, in particular problem-solving competences, organisational competences and leadership. There is no fundamental difference between these competences and those listed by supporters of the development of generic skills. It is because they are regarded as dependent on a context or a range of situations that the didactics for their acquisition will be different.

Concerning the methods of acquiring these competences and on their application in appropriate occupational situations, some people believe that basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics) and generic skills (problem-solving, communication, learning to learn) must be imparted, mainly at schools and training organisations. Others, while acknowledging the value of these competences, argue that *competences are dependent on their context*, and cannot be developed outside it.

Teaching innovations based on each of these two channels have been proposed. However, they all focus on autonomous learning and competences development via problem-solving, and are based on more customised and active teaching and pedagogy, as opposed to traditional teaching (traditional frontal learning or simple copying of behaviour in the workplace). Competence development as an autonomous and context-bound learning process thus takes place during an entire working life and entails several forms of learning (formal, informal, non-formal) (Descy/Tessaring, 2001).

▶ In Denmark, **VET Reform 2000**, is seen as *a major step towards a pedagogical innovation with a view to changing the education system to support lifelong learning*. It aims to give all young people a broad-based education and training after compulsory education; to improve the responsiveness of the system to the new qualification needs of the labour market; to improve level of esteem of VET, and to respond to youth's critical attitude towards education by opening up possibilities for the student to compose his/her own education. It is based on the principle of a simpler structure with more flexibility. The VET system now has fewer access routes (85 training programmes reduced to 7 foundation access courses – 6 in VET, 1 commercial). These basic programmes will include continuous guidance and counselling, tailored to the student's interests, capacities and motivation, which should lead to a more realistic final choice of education. The main VET specialisation programmes that follow the basic foundation will achieve at least the same levels of competence required by the labour market, and defined with the social partners in the existing VET system.

▶ A variety of initiatives are under way in Germany. A programme has been established by the ***Bündnis für Arbeit, Ausbildung und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit*** (Alliance for Employment, Training and Competitiveness) with a view to securing improvements in qualifications, which are expected to be finalised and confirmed in 2001. In 2000, the provision of apprenticeship and in-service training was repeatedly adjusted to keep pace with the rapid changes affecting the structures, technological capacity and work organisation of the economy and professional life. In the last two years, 36 existing branches of training have been modernised and seven new branches introduced.

The aims of the research and development programme known as ***Lernkultur Kompetenzentwicklung*** (Learning Culture and Skills Development) recently launched by the BMBF (*), are to devise permanent and effective learning structures based on learning at the workplace, the enhancement of individual professional skills and the consolidation of strategies for keeping skills up to scratch in case of unemployment. The priority of the programme is therefore to promote a learning culture of benefit not only to the learners but also to firms in helping them to improve their competitive position. The programme additionally includes projects to improve transparency, vocational guidance and the quality assurance of in-service training institutions, while also experimenting with new forms of certification, including recognition of informally acquired skills. Around EUR 18 million (DEM 35 million from the federal government and the European Social Fund) have been earmarked annually between 2001 and 2007 for these projects to be carried out.

The programme known as ***Schule-Wirtschaft/Arbeitsleben*** (Education-Economy/Working life) supports projects which prepare young people for the demands of professional activity in accordance with their experience and practice, and relate to all aspects of working life. It also encourages them to think in economic terms and develop their self-reliance. By using supervised learning to initiate young people into working and economic life, the programme prompts them to consider the role distribution of men and women, helps to give them better vocational guidance, and makes it easier for them to take decisions about learning and handle periods of transition.

The ***4. Empfehlung der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Weiterbildung*** (Fourth Recommendation of the *Kultusministerkonferenz* on Adult Education) of 2001 emphasizes the need to lay the foundations for lifelong learning from as early as primary education onwards. Schools are therefore increasingly concerned with paving the way for lifelong learning in terms of understanding and motivation. New learning arrangements and teaching concepts, methods and models which encourage self-controlled informal learning have been developed and tested in schools by the *Länder*. They make use, for example, of the new information and communication technologies.

(*) BMBF: *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* (Federal Ministry of Education and Research).

- In Italy, a **new system of apprenticeship** has been initiated. Since September 1998, the government has introduced a national plan to experiment with general training away from the workplace. Under this system, which is administered by schools alongside other types of institution and association, the following key tasks should be carried out: identification and mobilisation of resources; definition and regulation of standards; planning of regional and local provision; informing, supporting and motivating business managers; informing, motivating and counselling would-be apprentices; information management; establishment of specialised networks for administrative purposes; evaluation and certification; and accreditation and the training of trainers.

  Apprenticeship training in Italy is considered to be a continuous pathway, the essential features of which are as follows:
  - in-company training in which students contribute to production activity alongside the manager or other workers;
  - in-company training coupled with teaching activity that offers regular opportunities for an interview with the company tutor, away from the tasks of production;
  - general external training which is open, flexible and personalised and whose aims and characteristics are specified in current legislation.

  Training thus has the following characteristics:
  - it is structured on the basis of modules and teaching units so that apprentices and firms can choose from an exceptionally wide range of content, timetables and, in some cases, possible locations for their training. It consists therefore of structured training pathways which are personalised through the guided selection of modules;
  - apprentices and the firms to which they are allocated each receive a certain number of study vouchers which may be used in the local networks for general apprenticeship training or in other agencies.

- In the Netherlands, action has been taken **to improve the internal throughput of vocational education** (to secure a high percentage of graduates), **to eliminate blockages** in initial vocational training (between lower, intermediate and higher levels), and **to set this level of education** (whether lower, intermediate or higher) on a sound footing as a whole. A monitoring group called ***Impuls Beroepsonderwijs en Scholing*** (Incentives for Professional Education and Training) was set up in the autumn of 2000. Within this group, the government is working jointly with the social partners and vocational education organisations to prepare the content and carry out the groundwork for the measures concerned. These measures will involve post-initial training, as well as initial vocational education. The activity of the monitoring group will culminate in mid-2001 with a comprehensive agenda for joint implementation by the government and the social partners in the years ahead. A very extensive range of existing measures and policy initiatives will be invoked for this purpose.

- In Austria, in order to give a higher profile to an area hitherto regarded as an interface and encourage joint action, the department in charge of vocational education in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has launched the ***Education and Economy*** initia-

tive. Its aim is to **intensify the cooperation which already exists** between the Ministries of Education and of Commerce and Industry, and to **create new partnerships**.

- In Finland, the framework curriculum in vocational education **conveys the objectives of educational policy and indicates the requirements for national, uniform vocational expertise and core skills**, among which are learning to learn and making an active contribution to society. There are a total of 51 initial vocational qualifications with 112 study programmes in Finland. These qualifications are modular, flexible and allow different choices in order to meet the requirements of local working life and particularly the different needs and future plans of individual students. This makes it possible for students to select their specialisation area and also to plan their careers from the lifelong learning point of view. Common general education objectives are well met, but practical professional skill objectives receive more attention than basic skills and social skills at some institutions.

- In Sweden, upper secondary schooling for young persons and adults has **a common curriculum with specific goals for each type of school**. As in the new curriculum for compulsory schools, the goals stated in the curriculum for non-compulsory schools are of two kinds: goals that education should strive towards and those that everybody should be given the opportunity of achieving. The set of fundamental values which are to influence the activities of the school, and the demands imposed on students and school staff have been set out in six different sections, namely (i) knowledge, (ii) norms and values, (iii) responsibility and influence of pupils, (iv) choice of education -- work and civic life, (v) assessment and grades, and (vi) responsibility of the school head. The educational aims of the national programmes are set out in programme goals. Students choose between 17 national programmes, of which 13 are essentially vocational, two prepare them primarily for university, and the remaining two may be regarded as somewhere in between, since they can lead both to further studies and to work. Some national programmes are divided into branches. In addition to the national branches drawn up centrally, municipalities may choose to set up local branches adapted to local needs and conditions. The vocationally-oriented programmes must give a broad basic education within the vocational field concerned, as well as provide the foundation for further studies at post-secondary level. A subject syllabus can consist of a number of short courses both within the programme selected as well as from other programmes. Course goals are set out in syllabi, which are common to upper secondary schools and *Komvux* (municipal adult education).

1.2 'Second chances' for new basic skills and universal access to digital literacy

Summary

'Second chance' schemes are perhaps less common than action for general reform of programmes and systems. Some of these initiatives focus on basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, or even more general activity to fight widespread illiteracy, while others provide for admission to basic levels of vocational training in various sectors.

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Initiatives are targeted on certain particular target groups (such as the unemployed, women without qualifications, older workers, etc.). Special care is taken to ensure that training can be provided alongside the pursuit of professional activity or the fulfilment of family obligations, with the result that courses are often modular. Pilot forms of vocational provision for adults are tested to ensure that learners are motivated to return to programmes of training for qualifications. The aim is to avoid the kind of psychological ordeal associated with conventional provision (including tests, examinations, theorising and little real engagement on the part of learners themselves).

In some cases, use of distance education, radio and television is an integral part of training arrangements or of efforts to heighten awareness of them.

- In the Flemish Community of Belgium, ***Basiseducatie*** **(basic adult education)**, which is educational provision for adults with little or no schooling, has existed now for ten years. The content of teaching is aimed at improving basic skills that are essential for satisfactory social integration. Basic adult education also serves as a stepping stone to other educational and training facilities. At present, it is the subject of an **evaluation study** to examine how far policy objectives have been achieved. The study is also investigating the effectiveness of *Basiseducatie*, the efficiency of its management structure and the extent to which provision has reached its target group, and its findings will be used to improve the regulations concerned. An action plan to boost literacy is also due for completion. Besides *Basiseducatie*, *Tweedekansonderwijs* (second chance education) in the Flemish Community enables adults aged 18 or over who failed to graduate from secondary school for any reason, to obtain a general, technical or vocational secondary education diploma. The centres for second chance education will be able to award these diplomas for the first time in 2001, given that this is no longer the exclusive responsibility of the Examining Board of the Flemish Community.

- In Spain, the ***Alba*** programme offers second chances specifically to women. It is coordinated by the *Instituto de la Mujer* (Institute for Women) with support from the *Instituto Nacional de Empleo* (INEM, or National Employment Institute), the *Instituto Nacional de las Cualificaciones* (National Qualifications Institute) and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. The aim is to improve the employability of women who have not obtained basic qualifications. The project, which combines basic education with initial vocational training, was launched as part of the Leonardo da Vinci programme in 1998. It is already being implemented in several Autonomous Communities.

  Aulas Mentor is an open and distance education project initiated by a network of adult education centres. It offers a wide range of formal and non-formal education.

- The Ministry of Education in France has **broadened the scope of the priority education networks**, which now correspond to some 900 *zones d'éducation prioritaire/régions d'éduca-*

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tion prioritaire (ZEPs/REPs, priority education areas or regions) and almost 1 700 000 pupils. Over one pupil and teacher in five attend or work in *collèges* in ZEPs or REPs.

- In Greece, **adult education** in basic skills involves the development of rehabilitation initiatives geared to the needs of people in general, as well as particular social groups (prisoners, gypsies, etc.). The aim here is to prevent and fight social exclusion and boost the employability of the groups targeted. Action is concentrated primarily on **literacy, numeracy, personal empowerment and development, guidance and counselling**.

  Second chance schools are also for those aged over 18 who have not completed the nine years of compulsory education and wish to obtain a qualification to facilitate their labour market and general integration.

- In Ireland, the **Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)** was begun in order to offer 'second chance' training to unemployed workers aged over 21. The programme provides full-time training for persons who have been unemployed for at least six months. It is offered by the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and comprises a range of vocational training options from the basic level of the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA), in the case of those who have no qualifications, to NCVA level 2 corresponding to the post-leaving certificate. Participants may also take subjects included in the lower secondary education curriculum or in courses for the leaving certificate, or acquire a portfolio of qualifications to match their needs and interests. They may do their courses in groups in VTOS classes, or individually with each separately attending a selection of other courses. They receive a training allowance instead of their other social benefits to cover their meals and travel expenses.

  A service to **eradicate adult illiteracy** is run by the VECs. Participants are first of all supervised individually by voluntary tutors and then join small groups, from which they may progress towards formally recognised patterns of provision. Around 10 000 people benefit from the service each year. Besides this initiative, closer special attention is devoted to a sound grasp of arithmetic and the mother tongue in education and training programmes for those whose skills are inadequate and who wish to re-enter the labour market. Pilot schemes to tackle illiteracy are broadcast on the radio, and the Ministry of Education is now considering a TV initiative to boost awareness of the problem and offer appropriate training.

  An impressive range of courses for vocational preparation and training known as **post-leaving certificate (PLC) courses** is offered in over 200 centres attended each year by around 24 500 students in a very wide variety of subject areas and, in particular, business studies, computer science, electronics, sport, the leisure industry and tourism, catering, child care, community care, telecommunications and similar services, the arts and craft sectors and drama. Enrolment is free, and subsidies were introduced in September 1998 in line with available resources. At the outset, the scheme was meant to bridge the gap between school and work for those who had completed upper secondary education, but it is increasingly becoming an option for older adults with 25% of participants aged over 21.

In the field of further education, development of the **Back to Education Initiative** is in progress. While it will be based on existing schemes, it will lead to considerable expansion in part-time options under the PLC, Youthreach and VTOS programmes, in order to attract students who do not want to undertake full-time training and encourage people to combine family responsibilities and/or a job with continuing education and training. This type of initiative is essential in establishing a link between education/training and employment in a market on the move and enabling those without qualifications to acquire them. It is also concerned with increasing the flexibility of the system to meet the needs of people with jobs.

- In the Netherlands, the government has proposed to make **individual qualification contracts** available also to **older workers** – with financial support from the European Social Fund (ESF). The development of dual trajectories and work-based learning is also being extended to cover the high numbers of Dutch adults on occupational disability benefits in an effort to reintegrate them in employment.

- In Portugal, the ***Inserjovem*** programme, which is part of the National Plan for Employment in the 'Improving Employability' directive, seeks to offer young people who have been without employment for less than six months, a second chance in the form of training, professional experience, employment, retraining, personalised provision, guidance or indeed any other measure liable to promote their professional integration.

  The ***Reage*** programme, which is also part of the National Plan for Employment in the 'Improving Employability' directive, seeks to offer all the same facilities to adults who have been unemployed for less than 12 months.

- Denmark, Finland and Norway have special **adult apprenticeship programmes**. They are suited to adults who identify more with the workplace than the school environment, such as the unemployed or lower skilled workers who would be reluctant to return to full-time education and training. The position of adults is also strengthened by the provision, in many countries, of a modular form of apprenticeship. Following adult education reform in Denmark, there are two types of Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes on offer for adults. The first is Adult VET, which is indeed apprenticeship, including a training contract with an employer, and which differs from ordinary VET in that training may be shortened by the credit transfer of prior learning. The second is Basic Adult Education. This offers the same qualifications at the end of the education programme as ordinary VET and Adult VET but differs from the latter in two respects, as it is not apprenticeship with a contract – it is only possible to do up to a month's practical training as part of the education programme – and previous education and professional experience is recognised and supplemented by attendance at further courses to secure the validation of skills to a certain level. The latter type of education programme is organised in the form of part-time courses and is thus compatible with continued professional activity. In Finland the length of the apprenticeship is reduced by giving adults credits for their prior learning and work experience. The adult apprenticeship is then tailor-made to the profile of the individual apprentice who can take the modules and practical training necessary to fill his/her skill gaps and

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acquire an apprenticeship qualification, which is the same as the vocational qualification provided by vocational institutions to youth. In Norway, adult apprenticeship is becoming an important means of documenting and recognising informal on-the-job learning. Adult apprentices must have work experience equivalent to 125% of a normal apprenticeship period, usually 5 years. They do not pass an examination in general subjects but take the same theoretical and practical final examinations as apprentices. Their informal knowledge is considered to compensate for the general school subjects (languages, mathematics, social studies).

In Finland, labour market training is financed by the Ministry of Labour and provided free of charge. It is primarily targeted at unemployed job-seekers, as well as those aged over 20 who have become unemployed. Such training aims to provide its beneficiaries with the vocational skills required for daily working life, so it is varied and very practical, often involving periods spent at the workplace. It is organised in vocational adult education centres, other vocational establishments and higher education institutions, and may also be offered by private-sector providers. Applications for training are always made through an employment office, which then selects the trainees. During training, the latter may be eligible for a vocational training grant or for labour market support comparable to unemployment benefit. Over the last decade, the number of people in labour market training has varied with economic circumstances. For example, in 1990 just before the economic downturn, there were approximately 17 000 people in training, but this figure rose with the dramatic surge in unemployment. In 1995, it reached 33 000 and then peaked at 47 000 in 1997, before returning to just 21 000 in August 2000.

The quality of labour market training has generated much discussion. In the mid-1990s, in particular, when unemployment was at its highest, it was criticised as being no more than superfluous provision to keep those without work away from the labour market, thereby artificially lowering unemployment. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour launched an extensive independent study project to evaluate the effectiveness of training (Mikkonen, 1997). The project tracked 4 583 former trainees and observed any changes in their labour market status over the two-year period from 1993 to 1995, at the same time monitoring a control group of 5 197 job-seekers who had not received training. The study showed that training was to some extent more effective than its reputation suggested. During the follow-up period, 32% of trainees had strengthened their labour market status, as compared to a control group percentage of only 23%. The results were, however, dependent on the kind of training provided. They were most impressive in initial vocational education and retraining, but less so in vocational further and continuing education, special skills training and education for entrepreneurship. Their impact was least significant in guidance training, the aim of which is not to impart vocational skills but to empower job-seekers in their career decisions or guide them in their search for a job. The study also charted the effectiveness of labour market training in the mid-1990s, when the unemployment problem was at its worst in Finland and found that its quality could be improved. Since then, a fall in unemployment has been accompanied by a decrease in the scale of such training, together with its political significance and the level of concern for quality. However, it is difficult to deter-

mine the present situation with accuracy, as no further comparable study has been carried out. (*)

- Over the five-year period from 1997-2002, Sweden is undertaking its biggest ever investment in adult education, namely ***Kunskapslyftet*** (the Adult Education Initiative, or AEI). The initiative aims primarily to reduce unemployment, develop adult education, reduce the compartmentalisation of education and promote growth. The AEI is targeted essentially at unemployed adults who lack full three-year upper secondary qualifications, the idea being that those most in need should have a second chance to obtain them. It is intended that the entire provision of AEI should be governed in form and content by the needs, wishes and capacity of individual students, and flexibility and unconventional approaches are encouraged. The AEI aims to facilitate study for those unaccustomed to it, and often works closely with trade union organisations in its efforts to interest potential students. Facilitating study activity also requires the efficient use of information channels and the provision of comprehensive guidance, including a sound introduction to studies.

  The AEI began on 1 July 1997. All municipalities in Sweden are involved in the initiative and share responsibility for it with the government. While the latter provides financing in the form of state grants of some SEK 3.5 billion annually (equivalent to 100 000 annual study places), each municipality is individually responsible for organisation, planning and implementation. In 1999, two-thirds of AEI participants were women, while the proportion of those aged over 30 already stood at almost 60% in the spring of the same year. At that time, the less educated – those with no more than two years of upper secondary education – accounted for 67.5% of participants, corresponding to an increase of four percentage points compared to autumn 1997. The AEI has also led to an increase in the proportion of vocational courses on offer.

  In February 2001 the Swedish government put forward the Bill on *Adult Learning and the Future Development of Adult Education*, recommending that Parliament adopt goals for adult learning and a strategy for its development, alongside higher education, in a society for lifelong learning. Adult education and training has hitherto been too inclined to focus on the common background and needs of those receiving it, rather than their individual requirements. Teaching has often been organised in pre-packaged forms. Furthermore, the learning needs and requirements of adults have continually changed in recent years. Individual differences call for greater flexibility in outreach activities, guidance and counselling and the form and content of courses on offer, as well as greater cooperation at local level between education providers, employment offices, trade unions and other stakeholders. The proposals contained in the Bill focus on the individual person and presuppose the need for change and development in present-day adult education in a sustained effort to com-

(*) Source: Mikkonen, I. (1997). *Työvoimakoulutus osana työmarkkinapolkua: koulutuksen vaikuttavuus yksikötasolla.* (Labour Market training as a pathway to the labour market: effectiveness of training at individual level, in Finnish), Labour Policy Studies 174. Helsinki: Ministry of Labour.

ply with the principles and requirements of lifelong learning. The aim is that individuals should expand their knowledge and skills in the interests of personal development, participation in the democratic process, economic growth and employment.

- In the United Kingdom, in December 2000, the government published ***Skills for Life***, a paper setting out its proposed strategy for improving levels of literacy and numeracy in England. There are a number of developments linked to this, including the establishment of **ten Pathfinder Projects**, one in each of the English regions and one in the prison service. The aim of the projects is to pilot the delivery of the National Basic Skills Standards developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), and the new basic skills curriculum developed by teachers and volunteer mentors who have been trained in their use through the new intensive teacher training programme on offer through the Basic Skills Agency (BSA). The UK government also intends to use selective pilots to test further ideas to help produce a significant increase in the number of adults improving their basic skills. For example, it is planned to test the difference between IT-based and paper-based learning, or whether financial incentives to learners or their employers make a difference to the learning outcome. Partners are expected to come from a variety of sectors, such as the voluntary sector, colleges, family literacy and numeracy projects, work-based learning, ICT-based providers and Local Education Authorities (LEAs).

  In Wales, the **Basic Skills Strategy** has been introduced to improve standards of literacy and numeracy. The Strategy aims to tackle this problem with actions for pre-school children which will prevent failure, actions in school to catch children who are slipping through the net, and actions for adults which provide a second chance to learn the essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

  In Northern Ireland, a **Basic Skills Unit** (BSU) was established within the Educational Guidance Service for Adults (EGSA). The BSU is responsible for providing Ministers with guidance on the development of standards, curriculum, qualifications and tests, as well as qualifications for tutors teaching basic skills.

  The Scottish Executive launched the **Adult Literacy 2000 Team** in June 2000 to review policy on improving adult literacy and numeracy. This initiative is rooted in awareness that some adults lack proficiency in the area of basic skills and that this tends to prevent them from becoming involved in the culture of lifelong education and training. The team's recommendations should help people in all aspects of their lives – work, family and leisure. The Executive has allocated around EUR 36 million (GBP 22.5 million) over the next three years to implement their recommendations.

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1.3 Monitoring and meeting new skills needs

Summary

Few initiatives of this kind have been identified. This fact suggests that efforts should be made to establish a European approach to forecasting. The first steps in this direction are being made by constructing European scenarios of VET development (Cedefop, European Training Foundation, Max Goote Expert Centre, 2000). They should be complemented by quantitative approaches using comparable classifications and methods, but still leaving space for specific developments at national and regional level.

Where schemes exist, they are targeted at identification of future needs in the area of vocational qualifications in a general way and in the case of certain occupations. They consider the nature of these skills, the scale of requirements and their geographical distribution, etc. Schemes seek to translate the results of such analyses into action for readjusting provision in upper secondary and higher education, as well as in systems for initial and in-service vocational training.

▶ In Germany, a number of institutes – and in particular the *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* (BIBB, or Federal Institute for Vocational Training) – have started to establish **a system for early identification of changes in skills requirements**, particularly at the skilled worker level, and to provide such information in time for the reform of initial and continuing training occupations. Similar activities are being carried out in other countries (e.g. Spain and the UK) and an OECD working group has been established to monitor them. In Germany, several approaches are used:

- analysis of vacancy advertisements;
- enterprise surveys;
- analysis of training offers by vocational schools and academies;
- development and testing of early recognition instruments in employment areas with a low degree of professionalisation;
- utilisation of the network of professional associations and chambers;
- process development for a permanent close-to-work observation of skills requirements;
- skills development in the services sector;
- trend-setter detection;
- international comparative studies, etc. (Descy/Tessaring, 2001).

Action is proposed within the dual system of vocational training, for example by making use of **inter-company training workshops**. Some of these workshops should become supra-regional skills centres for the establishment of close links between intensive, continuing and other forms of training, information and counselling.

For the next two years, the federal government has earmarked an investment budget of around EUR 130 million (DEM 255 million) for the *Berufsschulen* (part-time vocational schools). This fixed-period project will supplement measures by the *Länder* **to provide *Berufsschulen* with computer technology for use of the new media**. Further aims of this project are to ensure effective joint action on the part of firms and *Berufsschulen*, and to improve the quality of training. At the same time, the federal government has embarked on the second phase of the 'anticipated recognition of qualifications requirements initiative' in order to react more rapidly to the way requirements vary in the labour market. Empirical research will contribute to identification of relevant areas of qualification in the future.

At the end of 1998, the German federal government ratified an **Emergency Programme to reduce Unemployment among Young People – Training, Qualification and Employment of Young People** *(Sofortprogramm zum Abbau der Jugendarbeitslosigkeit – Ausbildung, Qualifizierung und Beschäftigung Jugendlicher)*. Essentially, this programme pursues two aims: on the one hand, it includes measures enabling young unemployed people to obtain qualifications and enter the labour market and, on the other, provides for various additional activities to channel young people who have not yet secured apprenticeships or have dropped out of apprenticeship training, into some form of vocational training. In the last two years, this programme has quite clearly improved the training prospects of young people and helped to reduce youth unemployment. In 1999 and 2000, a total of 268 205 young people benefited from the 308 000 specific opportunities available. As in the case of the two previous years, around EUR 1 billion (DEM 2 billion) are being committed to this programme in 2001, both for ongoing projects and fresh measures. The share of this amount earmarked for the new *Länder* has gone up from 40% to 50%. A new mechanism to boost employment, introduced on 1 January 2001, is to award mobility grants to encourage the young unemployed to accept work in regions where job opportunities are better. The federal government has already announced that it intends to continue the programme until the end of 2003.

- Ireland has an **Expert Group on Future Skills Needs** to tackle the issue of skills needs and gaps, manpower needs and education and training for business. In 2000, it produced the *Report on e-business skills and Report on in-company training.* ([10])

- In Portugal, the **Inofor** *(Instituto para a Inovação na Formação)* has prepared and published forward-looking sectoral studies which are the outcome of thinking and discussion among economic players in each sector, the social partners, bodies for education and training and firms. They set out to identify the professions and skills of the future as people retrain for fresh qualifications (with emerging requirements viewed broadly), for the purpose of restructuring investment in training, satisfying the demands of economic competitiveness, innovating in

([10]) Reports are available at www.forfas.ie

training and linking up activity in various sectors. It is considered that this will enable the employment and training system to offer rational high quality provision.

- In Sweden, the task of *Gymnasiekommittén 2000* (Commission 2000 on Upper Secondary Education) is to discuss and put forward **proposals on how upper secondary education can be structured in the future**. In carrying out its investigation, the Commission will take account of circumstantial changes in society and the labour market, as well as the need to employ a broader range of graduates from higher education. The Commission was appointed in May 2000 and its official report is expected in April 2002.

- In order to tackle the skill gaps emerging in the new knowledge society, the United Kingdom created a **Skills Task Force** to assist the Secretary of State in developing a national skills agenda which will ensure that Britain has the skills needed to sustain high levels of employment, compete in the global market and provide opportunities for all. The Skills Task Force has just completed its mission with the publication of the agenda, *Opportunity and skills in the knowledge-driven economy* (2001). Since its creation in 1997, it has provided advice and reports on the following: the nature, extent, geographical and industrial pattern of skill needs and shortages; practical measures to ease skills and recruitment difficulties; likely changes in the longer term skill needs of the economy; and how best to ensure that the education and training system responds effectively to needs identified. The government and the new Learning and Skills Council will take forward the National Skills Agenda.

KEY MESSAGE 2: MORE INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

European Commission *Memorandum* on lifelong learning

Visibly raise levels of investment in human resources is required in order to place priority on Europe's most important asset – its people.

The Memorandum takes up the Lisbon Council conclusions by calling for more per capita investment in human resources to ensure replenishment of the skills pool.

In order to increase investment in human resources, it is necessary to re-think what counts as investment altogether. However, taxation regimes, accounting standards and company reporting and disclosure requirements in the Member States differ. For this reason alone, no single solutions are feasible. But neither would they be desirable: respect for diversity is the guiding principle of Community action.

At individual level, incentive measures must be more fully developed. The idea of individual learning accounts is an example. Company schemes that give employees an amount of time or money to pursue learning of their own choice or agreed to be vocationally relevant is another example.

The Social Partners have an important role to play in negotiating agreements for co-funding of learning for employees and more flexible working arrangements that make participation in learning practically feasible.

Whatever the particular measures devised in individual Member States, industries, occupational sectors or individual companies, the important point is that raising investment in human resources requires moving towards a culture of shared responsibilities and towards clear co-financing arrangements for participation in lifelong learning.

Summary

If one compares national figures from the OECD's report 'Education at a glance', over the past ten years, one finds that no great increase in spending has taken place. In fact, direct public spending as a percentage of GDP has decreased in some cases, though the differences are then balanced out by increased private investment. If no major shift has taken place over the past few years during which European economies have been improving, this must be an indication that no substantial increases are forthcoming. The emphasis therefore is on spending existing funding more efficiently and sharing the burden more equitably among all shareholders.

Efforts to stretch funding to cover new areas of lifelong learning, e.g. investments in pre-school education, have meant that some other areas have experienced budgetary cuts, such as higher

education and vocational training. Incentives to encourage employers and individuals to invest more, particularly in work-related training, are evident. Numerous tax relief systems are in force and individual learning accounts, which encourage individuals to pay into a pension-like fund to cover the cost of learning throughout life, are being experimented with in four countries. Cheeseman (2000) indicates that first results from Gloucestershire (UK) are positive. 68% of account holders have not engaged in any formal learning since leaving school/college, and 73.5% of holders earned less than EUR 23 700 (GBP 15 000) annually. However, care must be taken that this does not become yet another scheme for the 'haves' rather than the 'have nots'.

The European Social Fund in its latest phase makes provision for investment in the infrastructure of education and training and ICT equipment. Furthermore, the European eLearning Initiative encourages Member States to invest in the latter. Closer alignment of ESF funding with the National Action Plan for Employment guidelines will guarantee a certain support for learning measures to improve the employability, adaptability, equal opportunities and entrepreneurial zeal of Europe's human resources.

All Member States have now embarked on enabling some form of educational leave for their workforce. In a number of countries, mechanisms have been put in place to finance this leave. Statistics on participation are not readily available, but indications in this report suggest that these opportunities are under-utilised. The reason for this is most likely the financial limitations that they impose on participants, particularly those with family commitments, etc., who have to take a cut in income. Progress is being made, especially in bringing workers with various types of contracts into the leave systems, and in some cases applying similar conditions to the unemployed, who can then pursue education without the risk of having to terminate it prematurely, if they receive an offer of employment.

More and more companies are running competence development schemes for their employees and some are starting to take their human capital into consideration in their accounting and reporting systems, but this is an area not well documented. Maybe the results of the second European Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) carried out in 2000 will throw some new light on these activities.

The third research report on vocational education and training in Europe is being planned for 2002/03. The proposed theme of the report is impact research, i.e. the impact of social, economic and technological change on learning and skills requirements, and impact of training on individual, enterprise and socio-economic performance. Perhaps the question of social and economic returns on education and training could be given a thorough airing in this report.

Perhaps more importantly, further information on the effectiveness of different lifelong learning approaches, including funding would be more useful in developing appropriate financing mechanisms. Many of the different policies outlined within this report are new and require a thorough evaluation to assess their success and to encourage an informed exchange throughout the EU of different lifelong learning funding approaches and their evaluation.

Actions at European level

The common mission of the four Structural Funds ([1]) is to 'reduce the differences in living standards between the peoples and the regions of the EU' (ESF, 2000). The European Social Fund (ESF) is the EU's financial instrument for investing in people. It provides joint funding to help Member States meet goals agreed together with the Commission to create more and better jobs and fight unemployment. The EU created a common framework to increase Member States' capacity to create good jobs and alleviate unemployment – The European Employment Strategy. Each year the Commission and the Member States agree a set of guidelines under the four pillars: employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability, and equal opportunities. The Member States work towards these goals within their own annual National Action Plan for Employment (NAP). The most recent agenda for the Structural Funds emphasises streamlining and integration with related European Commission activities. Under the frame of reference for human resource development plans to be submitted under the 2000-2006 Programme, they must 'underpin the Employment guidelines and more particularly the priorities set out in the National Action Plans for Employment'. As one of the guidelines specifically deals with lifelong learning, and it is a horizontal theme running through the entire guidelines for 2001, there is growing potential here for targeting investment in the lifelong learning of individuals, as well as in the learning infrastructure, such as local learning centres and ICT equipment.

Since 2000, the ESF potential is being integrated into actions at Member State level to implement the European Employment Strategy. Most of the assistance for human resource development comes from the ESF under five headings:

- developing and promoting active labour market policies, which includes developing skills, bridging the gap between school and work, and addressing the problem of skill mismatch and reskilling;
- promoting equal opportunities for all in accessing the labour market, with particular emphasis on those exposed to social exclusion;
- promoting and improving training, education and counselling as part of a lifelong learning policy;
- promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce;
- specific measures to improve women's access to and participation in the labour market, including their career development.

Moreover, funding is also available to help adapt and modernise education and training systems and structures, including training of teachers and trainers and their skill renewal.

In addition to provision for human resource development, scope has been made for funding specific measures on education and training under a number of the Structural Funds' fields of intervention: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, assisting SMEs and the craft sector. Under the heading 'telecommunications infrastructure and the information society', special lines have been created

([1]) The Structural Funds comprise: the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance.

on services and applications for citizens and SMEs, in which education, training and networking are stressed. Provision is also made for assisting both large and small businesses develop environment-friendly technologies; educational technologies could also be included here.

Structural Fund programmes agreed for 2000-2006 make firm operational commitments towards promoting lifelong learning across the EU. Over the programming period, at least EUR 12 billion of the total ESF budget (EUR 60 billion) will go towards the development of lifelong learning. As indicated above, lifelong learning cuts across a number of priorities within ESF plans. This figure is a conservative estimate of support based on proposed expenditure under the specific ESF policy field on lifelong learning. However, there is wide diversity in approaches and classification of lifelong learning across ESF programmes. This may underestimate the true level of support for lifelong learning, both in aggregate and for individual Member States.

The share of ESF expenditure across Member States earmarked for the policy field lifelong learning ranges from around 40% to 8%. For some Member States, ESF does not just complement national effort on lifelong learning, it is the key motor for the development of a strategy for lifelong learning. Proposed expenditure on lifelong learning broadly reflects the level of educational attainment within Member States. Expenditure on lifelong learning tends to account for a greater share of ESF in Member States with lower levels of educational attainment.

In the Targeted Socio-economic Research Programme (TSER), a project known as *Further Training Funds as an Impulse for New Models of Lifelong Learning: integrated funding concepts* (IFC), examined the integration of existing patterns of funding with forms of lifelong learning. The aim was to develop new concepts which are geared to the needs of individual companies in selected sectors and concerned essentially with ongoing training both for permanent staff and the unemployed. Initially piloted in Denmark, job rotation was extended to other Member States through the EU Job-rotation Network, with ESF support under the Adapt Community Initiative. It provides opportunities for paid leave to some employees replaced in their jobs by unemployed people who, in turn, receive a period of on-the-job training.

2.1 Investing more in lifelong learning and human resource development

Summary

Across the EU Member States, public funds are the prime source for primary and secondary levels of education and training as well as for tertiary level education.

- Spain is investing additional resources in pre-primary education. Measures relating to this level are essentially concerned with **broadening access and enrolment**. During the 1998/99 school year, 100% of children aged 5, 98.2% of children aged 4 and 75.4% of those aged 3 attended pre-school. In the case of children aged under 3, the corresponding

proportion is rising far more slowly. Further efforts to extend education to the very youngest children appear necessary and will undoubtedly be a priority for the future.

- Ireland is also **investing in its pre-primary education**. Until now, there has been no nationally organised provision at this level. The recently published White Paper on early childhood education, *Ready to Learn* (1999), marked the beginning of action to establish a national framework for the education of children at a very early age. The White Paper sets out a qualitative framework for the development of this level of education. A *Quality in education* label will be introduced and awarded to those institutions or supervised settings which offer provision of this kind, while complying with formal requirements relating to educational practice, learning objectives and activities. This measure will be especially concerned to assist current private providers in improving the quality of their services. However, the State will act in appropriate cases to organise direct provision for the benefit of priority target groups and, in particular, for disadvantaged children or those with special needs. An independent body, the Early Childhood Education Agency (ECEA) will be set up in order to take over a number of political and executive tasks concerned with the establishment of norms, as well as with appraisal, inspection, curricular organisation, qualifications, research and development.

- In Italy nearly all 3 to 6 year-olds attend pre-school education. **Education and child-care services for the 0 to 3 year-olds are currently at the forefront of education policy.** The *Asili nido* became a priority during the last decade. In 1999, a bill was submitted to Parliament which should redefine the nature and provision of these services. The bill outlines several types of setting: centres for children and parents, services at home for families with children under 3 cared for by professional minders, services at the homes of child minders.

- The aim of the Finnish government is to ensure that **all chidren aged 6 receive free pre-primary education** with effect from the year 2001. Lifelong education is one of the major considerations underlying this reform.

- In Sweden, the first pre-primary curriculum was introduced in 1998 with the aim of placing greater emphasis on educational aspects and developing close links between pre-primary education, in its classes for children aged 6, and the beginning of compulsory schooling. The local authorities in Sweden are obliged to offer pre-primary education to all children who have reached the age of 1 and whose parents are at work or studying. **Fresh legislation will provide all children aged 4-5 with at least 525 hours of pre-primary education a year** (three hours a day). In order to increase the number of children taking part in pre-primary activities in general, the Swedish government is offering grants to municipalities introducing maximum fees for all such activities.

- As a result of recent changes to Government pre-school provision policy, all local education authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales now have a statutory duty to secure a good-quality, free (part-time) **place for all three-year-olds whose parents want it**. The Government recently announced that from September 2004 they would guarantee five two-and-

a-half hour sessions per week to every three-year-old whose parent wants them. In Northern Ireland there is no statutory requirement for the provision of nursery education. However, current government initiatives aim to provide an additional 20% of Government-funded, part-time pre-school places in a range of settings and to increase this provision in the long term to enable a full year of pre-school education for every child whose parents wish it.

Further and higher education

- Italy is investing additional resources in both the education and training systems, with the aim of raising school participation rates, promoting students' success, and increasing adult participation in education and training.

- The Netherlands wishes to give educational institutions greater freedom to cater for different levels and kinds of educational demand and regulate the financing of education more in accordance with demand governed by market forces. The aim is to ensure that education designed to satisfy particular requirements is coupled with greater financial commitment on the part of those who benefit from its services. In the period from 2000-2003, therefore, the Netherlands will introduce a system of **vouchers** in vocational higher education. By so doing, it hopes to make the system more flexible. A student embarking on a particular programme of courses in higher education will receive a certain number of 'right to learn' vouchers exchangeable at higher education institutions. It is also hoped that the system will boost the freedom of students to choose courses. They may be enrolled for a degree course at a particular university but, during the course, will have the right to decide in which year they will use their voucher with no other commitment to the (other) institution at which they do so. The voucher system also implies that higher education will be differently funded. Under the current system, institutions are paid directly by the government. With the voucher arrangements, payment will be almost directly the responsibility of the students. Yet a further hope is that the system will encourage institutions to provide attractive teaching conditions. The logic is that institutions which are more financially dependent on their students will be more responsive to their 'clients'. Experimentation is getting under way in September 2001, and will be conducted solely in vocational higher education (the HBO institutions) and not the universities.

- Since 1975, Sweden has offered various kinds of financial assistance to adults wishing to return to secondary education. Financial support for those returning to study in higher education dates back even further. The Swedish parliament has recently adopted **new legislation to ease the financial burden that a fresh round of study represents and to encourage it**. These new arrangements will come into effect on 1 July 2001. In order to support the recruitment of those with the greatest need for education and to improve conditions for those who because of a functional disability need longer time for their studies, the Swedish Government proposes in the Bill *Adult Learning and the Future Development of Adult Education* a new form of study grant, within the framework of the study allowance system, from 1 January 2003. The grant will be payable for studies at secondary and upper secondary

level and will be equivalent to a full study allowance: that is, approximately EUR 792 (SEK 7 200) per month – in some cases approximately EUR 968 (SEK 8 800) per month. The grant will be payable for a maximum of 50 weeks to those aged 25 and over who have not yet completed three years of upper secondary education and who are unemployed, risk becoming unemployed, or have a functional disability. It will not affect the length of time for which 'ordinary' study allowances are payable.

- To increase the enrolment capacity of further education, the United Kingdom is going to create **700 000 additional places by 2002**. The government is providing additional funds to broaden enrolment, raise standards and compensate for a quantitative lack of skills in some areas. More specifically, support is available for those who lack the means to finance their education. The General Further Education Access Fund (which may be used to cover transport and living expenses, as well as childminding, etc.) rose from EUR 59 645 810 (GBP 37 million) in 1999/2000 (for 90 000 students) to EUR 87 046 957 (GBP 54 million) in 2000/2001 (for 120 000 students). In higher education, 100 000 places will be created by 2002. The government is also investing additional support to maintain quality and standards, improve facilities and increase access to this level of education.

  The Scottish Executive is committed to ensuring that anyone capable of embarking on further or higher education is able to do so. **Special importance has been attached to further education** given its pivotal role as regards access to lifelong learning. Improved access to further education and higher enrolment rates among the disadvantaged, those with special needs or from minority ethnic groups remains a priority. It is hoped that student numbers will rise by 40 000 in Further Education and 2 800 in Higher Education by academic year 2003/2004.

Supporting eLearning

The knowledge-based society implies that every citizen must be 'digitally literate'. Following the Lisbon European Council, the eLearning initiative (COM 2000 318) was launched to mobilise the educational and cultural communities to make this possible. Some of the main objectives of this initiative are to create educational infrastructures and systems in which all citizens can attain the skills necessary to live in the new information society, particularly ICT and Internet skills. The aim is to provide pupils and teachers with broad digital literacy by the end of 2003. Achieving this aim implies a heavy financial investment in terms of equipment, training, multimedia services and content. Many Member States have responded to this challenge by investing in schools' infrastructure and personnel (see also Chapter dedicated to the *Memorandum* Key Message 3).

- France has undertaken the **necessary investment for schools to be connected** from now on to the Internet: this has meant all *lycées* by the end of the year 2000, and all primary schools and *collèges* by 2002 (45% are already connected). Pupils, students and teachers have become aware of the teaching revolution triggered off by the use of ICT in schools and universities. Furthermore, the symposium on *e-éducation* organised by the French presidency at

the inauguration of the *Salon de l'éducation* (national education fair) in November 2000 sought to provide an overview of action, thinking and discussion in the field and compare and contrast the situation with corresponding developments in other Member States.

- In Italy, a **special investment** has been made to equip educational institutions with ICT facilities through the *Piano nazionale per le tecnologie didattiche*, which aims to promote mastery of ICT by students, improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, and promote the professional skills of teachers.

- Austria is determined **to provide all schools and educational institutions with rapid Internet access**, and also make **top quality ICT facilities** available to specialised post-secondary and higher establishments and the universities (increase in pass bands, fully protected rapid internal networks based on structured cabling for all educational institutions, intranets at each school, etc.). Public/private partnerships are also envisaged so that institutions may also use these technologies as cheaply as possible. The Austrian educational computer network (ACOnet and ASN) has been extended and linked to international training and research networks.

- In Portugal, investment is directed at providing schools and other educational establishments with ICT facilities. The August 2000 **Council of Ministers Resolution** seeks **to speed up use of the Internet**, now regarded as a strategic priority. An action plan has been proposed to achieve the fullest possible expansion of ICT and its appropriation throughout society. Under the plan, all schools and other institutions from the level of pre-primary to higher education are securing Internet access in 2001, all teachers are to have their own home computers by 2004, and all students in secondary and higher education will also have personal computers in 2003. Also planned is a tenfold annual increase in the volume of Portuguese language content on the Internet in the next three years. Furthermore, in August 2000 a special group was entrusted with the coordination and implementation of programmes to provide schools with ICT facilities, arrange for the curricular integration of ICT and organise training for this purpose. This action includes the development of multimedia software and facilities for education. Among the aims of the ALFA Programme of support (from 2000-2006) for the first stage of *ensino básico* (basic education) is financial assistance to the schools concerned so that they get the infrastructure they need to improve their educational provision to the most disadvantaged.

- In the United Kingdom, the Government is investing heavily in a number of ICT initiatives. The National Grid for Learning (NGfL) was extended to 2004, with additional funding (for England) of EUR 1 362 billion (GBP 865 million). In Wales, **Further Education Net and Further Education Net in Action** aim to upgrade connection to the Internet *(FE Net)* and maximise the value of investment made in equipping and networking colleges by a programme of staff development *(FE Net in Action)*. The *FE Net* programme of upgrades was completed in 1997 and extended in 2000. *FE Net in Action* is funded until 2001. The budget for 1999/2000 for *FE Net* was EUR 0.97 million (GBP 0.6 million) and for *FE Net in Action*, EUR 0.051 million (GBP 0.08 million).

The **e-University** aims to deliver high quality higher education learning over the Internet. Any UK higher education (HE) institution will be able to deliver courses and student services through the e-University, provided they meet quality and standards thresholds. Higher education funding bodies are working through the e-University steering group, institutions and private partners. The e-University is planned to start in 2002. The government has provided EUR 100.85 million (GBP 62 million) over three years (2002 to 2004) for the project.

2.2 Developing incentives, removing barriers, encouraging individuals and enterprises to invest

Summary

Public funds are also the prime source of funding for certain target groups such as unemployed people and those with very low levels of education. Most debates on lifelong learning focus on increasing adult learning opportunities. The level of increase is particularly difficult to quantify, due not only to the wide variety of settings in which it takes place and the very different needs of such a diverse population, but also because relatively little is known in quantitative terms about the existing level of opportunity. This is particularly so, given that much of adult learning takes place in the private rather than the public sector. Arguably, in the long term, questions concerning investment have to take into account resources for the whole learning cycle. ([12])

While all countries guarantee a minimum level of education and training within their compulsory education systems which are government funded, there are wide variations in the sphere of adult and continuing learning. Some countries (e.g. France and Belgium) guarantee access rights to education and training for all adults through educational leave schemes (see paragraph 2.3 Developing flexible working arrangements that encompass time for learning). Others have defined minimum level qualifications which should be attained by all people, e.g. the Netherlands, while the United Kingdom has defined achievement targets for those attaining different levels of qualification. In other words, the concept of lifelong learning and what it means in terms of target participation and/or achievements is defined according to the individual country context. Furthermore, many of the issues inherent to lifelong learning, question whether education and training structures should be merely expanded or more thoroughly reformed: resource implications are not just about providing 'more of the same' but also considering how to 'do things in a better way'. The notion of implementing a true lifelong learning structure, with a range of learning opportunities for all, challenges so many parameters at once, that the resource implications are not clear. For example, the term lifewide learning

([12]) Many countries have been attempting to change the funding structures for compulsory level learning. Changes include trends towards decentralisation, increased provider autonomy, a greater transparency of costs through the introduction of formula funding amongst many others. For a further discussion of this subject, see *Key topics in education, Volume 2: Financing and management of resources in compulsory education in Europe. Trends in national policies.*

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where, less formal learning is recognised as well as the emergence of new learning approaches, such as eLearning, changes the cost parameters for learning.

Despite these uncertainties, there are many examples across the EU of education and training funding policies which attempt to create incentives and to overcome obstacles for individuals and enterprises to invest more in training through partnership funding approaches. Perhaps the most widespread example of this partnership approach is apprenticeship type training.

Apprenticeship

Funding arrangements for apprenticeship type training attempt to balance public and private responsibilities given that the returns are shared between individuals and enterprises (and ultimately the economy and society). The recognition that initial training should be as relevant to the world of work as possible, has led to an increased emphasis on the merits of apprenticeship training in a number of EU countries. Denmark, for example, has reorganised all of its initial training provision so that all participants have a work placement. The funding arrangements have also changed to reflect this change. While the school-based theoretical training is publicly funded through the taximeter formula, the costs incurred through work placements are reimbursed through the collective employer fund. The fund is also used to finance practical training in colleges for those without a work placement. All enterprises contribute to this fund proportionately to employee numbers, and the public subsidy that used to be allocated to the fund is being phased out.

- In France, private enterprises with more than 10 employees contribute 1.5% of the total wage bill, those with less than 10 contribute 0.25%, to a training levy. The wage costs for apprentices are covered by this levy on employers which then reimburses enterprises (a percentage of the levy may also be used to contribute to budgets for training institutions and other allowances to the apprentice).

- In Germany, the public sector covers the costs of the school-based element while enterprises meet the costs of work placements, although there is no formalised fund to meet these costs.

- In Italy, Law 196/97 established that apprentices in the age group 16-26 participate in training activities outside the workplace for at least 240 hours a year, in accordance with procedures defined in national collective agreements. The obligation to attend education or training up to the age of 18 may be fulfilled at school, in vocational training or in apprenticeship.

Adult and continuing learning

The political culture of individual countries and their institutional arrangements impact the way in which funding responsibilities are balanced for adult and continuing learning. For example, the role of social partners varies from country to country. It is broadly recognised that employers should fund training for their employees from which they will directly benefit. The ways in

which this funding is encouraged and secured varies widely across the EU from defining their contribution in statute (e.g. the levy scheme in France) to incentive and recognition schemes (e.g. the investors in people scheme in the UK). All Spanish enterprises (excluding the Basque region) pay 0.7% of total wage bill to the levy: 0.6% comes from the enterprise and 0.1% from employees. In the Netherlands, in some collective agreements at the sector level, enterprises contribute to training funds (*O+O* funds). Percentage contributions vary from 0.1% to 0.64%.

- Changing skills needs have also led some enterprises to recognise the importance of more generic training enhancing skills at the workplace. **Ford Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP)** has been operating in the United Kingdom since 1989 having been established in 1987 as a component of the wage and salary negotiations within the collective agreement with the union. The principle of the scheme is to provide all employees with the opportunity to participate in a wide range of developmental activities including personal career and non-career related education and training.

  The EDAP funds are managed by joint management and union committees, which approve applications from employees. The committees are distinct from the training department dealing with job-related training. Ford earmarks a sum of EUR 316 (GBP 200) per employee, although employees can pay additional funds to participate in the education and training of their choice. Ford pays the funds directly to the education or training provider. Employees participate in their own free time. Annually, approximately 35% of all employees participate in EDAP-supported learning (West et al., 2000).

  The rationale for the **Skandia Competence Insurance Scheme** is to create financial possibilities for employees to gain new skills. The scheme is based on joint employer/employee funding whereby money can be set aside for the employee to participate in education and training during work time and receive their full salary. The scheme is optional for employees. There are set minimum and maximum amounts that an employee can contribute to the competence insurance fund which Skandia matches. Skandia funds 3 times the amount for employees aged 45 or more, those that have worked for Skandia for more than 15 years and those with only lower secondary schooling. All contributions are exempt from income and wealth tax until the employee draws on the funds. Employees can choose how to spend their insurance funds how they wish within limits.

One of the major challenges of lifelong learning is to make sure that all adults can access a wider variety of learning opportunities, not necessarily job-specific, whatever their employment status. The rationale for public intervention targeted at the general population is founded on numerous reasons, perhaps the main one being that individuals are unable to borrow for education and training in the same way as for other investment due to the uncertainty of the returns and difficulties in securing loans. The uncertainty of returns also discourages individuals from undertaking the risks associated with such an investment. A number of countries have introduced a variety of incentive schemes to assist individuals wishing to further their training, ranging from earmarking tax contributions to training, tax reductions on training expenditure, subsidies and loans. Such schemes may be tied to other policy priorities, such as additional help

for low income groups and/or for participating in types of training viewed as beneficial to overcoming skills gaps in the economy.

- In Denmark, financing education and advanced and continuing training has always been considered a public responsibility. Measures **to fund programmes and financial support for those who sign up for them** are an integral part of adult education reform. Provision for those who return to compulsory or upper secondary education is fully financed by the public authorities, though occasionally with a minor contribution from those involved. In the case of vocational training, the social partners, who are represented on the committee of a newly created body, the Labour Market Institution for Financing of Education and Training, will be able to make their recommendations to the ministers of education and employment as regards the funding and organisation of adult and continuing education. Participants will make no financial contribution when enrolling in basic adult education courses. In the case of advanced adult education and training, State funding will always be supplemented by a personal contribution. Those taking part in advanced continuing education and training, will continue to receive public financial assistance to support their living costs. This may occur in two ways:
  - in the form of support under more favourable terms from the Ministry of Education for all poorly qualified adults who return to lower or upper secondary education and to higher education;
  - a special allocation from the (Ministry of Employment) Labour Market Institution for Financing of Education and Training for those who enrol for a vocational training programme. This special allocation is intended to compensate for the loss of income obtainable from professional activity or the prospect of it.

- Germany is pinning its faith on **encouragement and incentives**, over and above the legislation, **particularly where continuing education is concerned**. Decentralised control and allowing individual responsibility and independence in the choice of studies are principles upon which measures are based. The budget to promote continuing education and training has been increased by half since 1998, rising from EUR 51 129 188 (DEM 100 million) to EUR 76 693 782 (DEM 150 million) in the year 2000.

- ***Bildungskontos*** (training accounts) in Austria – a number of provinces within Austria have established schemes to assist adults furthering their education and training. Similarly with all of the different provincial schemes, individuals wanting to participate in a course can secure a financial entitlement towards the cost of training. At the outset, the participant pays all the training costs, but subject to meeting certain criteria, the provincial government and/or social partner organisations enters into a contractual agreement with the individual to reimburse part of the costs (West et al., 2000).

- In Portugal, **individual training initiatives** as a means of accessing training seek to promote lifelong learning among the employed and unemployed. Individuals themselves take the initiative and are responsible for registering for training courses to improve their occupational qualifications, paying their own registration fee and submitting their own application for

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finance. The training courses are provided by training bodies duly accredited by Inofor – the Institute for Training Innovation – and financed by the ESF.

- The third phase of the Finnish training guarantee scheme was introduced in January 2001. This third stage of the scheme emphasises that adults active in working life are now **eligible for aid in proportion to their income for full-time vocational education or training promoting vocational skills**. Aid is available for a total of 1.5 years in one or several periods during their working career. The aim of the aid is to compensate for the loss of income during studies or training and it should have a positive effect on motivating workers to engage in lifelong learning.

- The **Career Development Loans (CDL)** in the United Kingdom (Atkinson, 1999) is a deferred repayment bank loan which assists adults to pay for education and training. There are ceilings on the loan available which will pay up to 80% of course fees, materials and other related expenses. Income is taken into account when deciding how much can be loaned through the scheme. Interest costs on the loan are met by the government until one month after completion of the course (this can be deferred further for up to 5 months, if the borrower is not in employment).

Individual learning accounts (ILAs)

More experimental schemes include establishing 'asset-building' approaches for funding learning, such as through **individual learning accounts (ILAs)**. The principle behind ILAs is to enable individuals to save for future learning needs from existing income in the same way that they can save for other needs, for example, pensions. A variety of funding sources and mechanisms (e.g. tax relief, public subsidies and employer contributions) can be combined within learning accounts depending on the priorities for certain target groups and for encouraging specific types of learning activity. The model recently implemented in the United Kingdom and the proposals within the Netherlands and Sweden are briefly outlined below:

- The ILA model in the United Kingdom is based on the general principle that individuals are best placed to gauge their own educational needs and that investment in learning should be a shared responsibility. ILAs were implemented in September 2000 and are administered by the ILA Centre, run by a private company. By the end of 2000, nearly half a million people had opened an account with the minimum amount of EUR 40 (GBP 25 ([13])) and had received a government subsidy of EUR 237 (GBP 150), available for the first million account holders. Anyone over 19 years old can open an account. Once an account is opened, holders receive an ILA card and an annual statement summarising the learning undertaken.

([13]) GBP-EUR exchange rate based on the spot figure for 12/03/2001 from the European Central Bank. GBP 1 = EUR 0.6336. Figures have been rounded up.

Account holders can receive 80% discounts on certain courses, such as computer literacy skills, up to a total value of EUR 316 (GBP 200) per year. 20% discounts are available on a wider range of courses up to a total value of EUR 158 (GBP 100) per year. There are a number of restrictions on what type of learning the public incentives can be used for: training which is a statutory requirement for the individuals' employer and recreational courses are excluded, for example.

The ILA scheme aims to overcome some of the financial obstacles to participating in learning and is designed to encourage new learners and new funding partnerships. Through its links with information services, it is expected that participants will become more demanding purchasers of learning, eventually ensuring that providers become more responsive and quality will increase.

In Scotland, *Individual Learning Accounts* (ILAs), available by contacting *learndirect scotland*, offer people a new way of investing in their own training at any level and under any circumstances. These savings accounts are a new way for them to control and plan their savings and enable employers or the government to contribute to the costs of the learning involved. Anyone aged 18 or over may open an account and use the money to cover the direct costs of education and training, counselling and guidance. The scheme has been fully implemented throughout Scotland since September 2000. It is anticipated that by 2002 the target figure of 100 000 accounts will have been exceeded. Similar conditions with regard to government subsidies and discounts to those in the UK apply. Further pilot projects to support other indirect training costs (childminding, daily travel expenses, etc.) are under way.

▶ As with the UK scheme, the proposal for implementing individual learning accounts in Sweden, from 2002 (Lönnberg, 2000), is based on the belief that individuals are best placed to choose their own learning paths and that funding for the account should be shared. The proposals emphasise the role of employer contributions and that the scheme should complement existing measures for funding individual competence development. The eventual aim of the scheme is that all adults will have an account when the system comes into operation.

The proposals, which have yet to pass through the legislative stages, include ceiling contributions from both individuals and their employers which would be entitled to tax relief (EUR 4 137 = SEK 37 700 ([14]) in 2002). A competence grant premium in the form of a further tax deduction will be available to individuals withdrawing funds over a certain amount to be used for learning. The funding design for the accounts mirrors that of individual pension savings schemes in Sweden to ensure familiarity with the operation. The scheme also includes a proposal to convert amounts retained within the account, when holders reach retirement age, into pension savings (there will be limits on the funds held within learning accounts to prevent supplementary pension savings.

([14]) SEK-EUR exchange rate based on the spot figure for 12/03/2001 from the European Central Bank. SEK 1 = EUR 9.1128. Figures have been rounded up.

To launch the system, the proposals include subsidies for people between 30 and 55 up to a certain income level and dependent on their own contribution to the account within the first year. People falling into the age and income categories will receive matched funding when they, or their employer, have contributed EUR 274 (SEK 2 500). Current proposals also emphasise the need to involve employer contributions within the learning account scheme through offering a 10% tax reduction on payroll costs for funds allocated to employee accounts. A Government bill in this area is expected during 2001.

- In the Netherlands, an individual learning account is one that may be opened in the name of a worker or job applicant to fund courses or training. Money may be paid into it by the worker, the employer or other interested parties. Eight such projects have started since February 2001. The individual account is the result of an agreement between the organisation responsible for the project, an employer and an employee. Project experimentation is to be conducted by industrial branch training funds, broker organisations and regional adult education and training centres. For each account opened, the State will contribute around EUR 445 (NLG 1000). Employer contributions are already subject to tax allowances. The experiment will be evaluated in mid-2001, and the findings used as a basis for full-scale implementation. The Netherlands are taking part in the European Learning Account Project (ELAP), together with Spain (in the Basque region), Sweden and England.

The need to mobilise and leverage a wider variety of financial resources for lifelong learning is at the heart of a number of new policy initiatives. No country has used such policies to replace its existing fiscal measures or training entitlements, which are seen as supplementary policies within the existing regime. In the same way, funds are being increasingly targeted at specific groups and/or at certain types of training perceived to be at a shortage within the economy. The variety of approaches to mobilise additional resources across the EU whether through regulation and/or exhortation leads to a very diverse picture of lifelong learning policies.

2.3 Developing flexible working arrangements that encompass time for learning

Summary

Resource issues are rarely about funding alone; time is always an important factor. The adage 'time is money' is particularly applicable in a context where undertaking training is a direct substitute for working to produce saleable output (for example, some enterprises in France will pay for training under agreed conditions whereby an employee participates outside of working hours). Time is also a complementary resource for ensuring access to learning opportunities. Educational or training leave schemes recognise the importance of providing time for individuals to participate in learning. Some schemes are combined with fiscal incentives to overcome the dual time and money obstacles. All Member States are interested in encouraging leave policies either through statutory or voluntary arrangements because of the perceived benefits to the productive potential and hence competitiveness and growth in the longer term.

Educational leave gives employed people (and sometimes, other target groups) the right to participate in the training of their choice with the agreement of their employer. Securing the involvement and consent of the social partners in operating leave schemes is, therefore, essential. The leave arrangements currently in operation across the EU Member States vary a great deal in terms of target groups and/or sectors, eligibility criteria, types of training covered, eligible providers as well as the regulatory and fiscal framework (some schemes provide payment to an individual taking leave whereas others do not). Most also cover both public and private sector employees although there may be more than one scheme targeted at different categories of employees. For example, in Germany employees in most *Länder* are legally entitled to paid educational leave, Luxembourg has a separate scheme for civil servants and Portugal operates different schemes for student workers and teachers. Some are open only to permanent employees whereas others are available to temporary workers (e.g. Finland), fixed-term contractors (e.g. France) and part-time workers (e.g. Spain).

Countries which have paid educational leave schemes have a variety of funding arrangements for the paid element. In France, for example, a percentage of the training levy on companies is allocated to training leave. In Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands, enterprises are supported for some of the costs of training leave if they replace the employee taking the leave with an unemployed person (known as job rotation schemes). Some examples of paid and unpaid leave schemes are given within the following box. ([15])

([15]) More information on leave schemes within each Member State can be found on www.trainingvillage.eu.int

Paid educational leave (PEL)					Other forms of leave used for educational purposes
Name of country	Target sector and group	Types of training	Duration and funding	No of participants	
Belgium	All private sector employees, including employees in SMEs and part-time workers	Both general and vocational education and training e.g. university and trade union courses, state examinations, etc.	Maximum 180 hours per year. Through a fund scheme which is part publicly funded and through employer contributions	In the period 1998/99, approximately 18 580	Unpaid educational leave combined with a job rotation policy
Denmark (*)	Employed persons, private entrepreneurs, unemployed over 25 receiving unemployment benefits	Excludes long and medium term, higher education	Up to one year. Paid by the State from worker's labour market contribution = 8% of gross salary	75 146 in 1996	Child care leave, sabbatical leave, job rotation
Germany	Private and public sector employees and workers with a minimum 6 months in the same job	Key subjects: languages, ICT, oratory	5 days/year or 10 days/2 years. Rights can be transferred or merged. Funding from 3 parties involved: employer pays salary, participants pay course costs and State gives subsidies to training providers		Unpaid educational leave based on company agreements or specific collective agreements

(*) Since 1 January 2001, paid educational leave has been replaced by the two support schemes introduced under the adult education reform referred to in the chapter concerned with Key Message 2, section 2.2.

Name of country	Paid educational leave (PEL)				Other forms of leave used for educational purposes
	Target sector and group	Types of training	Duration and funding	No of participants	
Greece	Private and public sector employees & workers under special conditions	Further & postgraduate training, on-the-job training, examinations	For public sector max. 5 years in the whole working life. Funded by European Social Fund with the State (60%), remainder funded by the enterprise		
Spain	Private and public sector permanent and part time workers with at least 1 year in the same company. Also workers who become unemployed when they start a period of training	Post-graduate University courses and other types of officially recognised vocational training courses	PEL is not dependent on the length of the training course. Financing from the training levy covers a period of 200 working hours	In 1999/2000, 5 794	
France	Both public and private sector workers including those on temporary or fixed-term contract	Both general and vocational education and training, initial education and competence-based training	Maximum 3 years in a working lifetime. Funded through the levy scheme	6227 civil servants in 1997, 5 492 employees under fixed-term contract in 1998 and 1 302 temporary workers in 1999 took PEL	
Ireland					No formal educational leave. However examples of such practice across the civil service and private industry in an unregulated way

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Paid educational leave (PEL)					Other forms of leave used for educational purposes
Name of country	Target sector and group	Types of training	Duration and funding	No of participants	
Italy	Both private and public sector employees who have been working for the same company for at least 5 years. Also unemployed people, self-employed, immigrants and housewives	Both vocational and general education, i.e. compulsory education, courses in primary and secondary education institutions and officially recognized vocational schools, participation in school or university examinations etc.	Maximum 11 months during working life. Employment fund at regional level, interprofessional fund at company or local level		The educational leave scheme already described is in fact unpaid educational leave. However there are various kinds of available financing which can be drawn on during the leave period
Luxembourg	Public sector employees and civil servants and staff representatives in private sector companies	All types of civic and social training, and further training focuses on young people, vocational training for adults. For company representatives, courses on company financial management, labour law etc.	For public sector employees max 60 days per working life. For private company representatives max 1 week per year. In private sector allowance reimbursed to employer by the State	In 1999, 1 481 employees in the public sector and 649 staff representatives in private sector companies	Leave related to training plans
Netherlands	Both private and public sector employees especially those lacking the required level of competences	Courses at all level from basic to higher vocational education	The average duration is 5 days per year. Negotiated between social partners, paid from O&O fund	In 1994, 23.9% of employees younger than 45 and 13.2% of employees 45-65 years old	Unpaid educational leave which aims also at promoting job rotation
Austria	Private sector employees who have worked for the same company for at least 3 years without interruption	All types of training or continuing training	3 months-1 year. Funded through unemployment insurance funds (50% from employees and 50% from employer contributions)	In 1999, 22 647	Unpaid educational leave, continuing training allowance also combined with a job rotation scheme, parental leave

Paid educational leave (PEL)					Other forms of leave used for educational purposes
Name of country	Target sector and group	Types of training	Duration and funding	No of participants	
Portugal	Public and private sector student workers, civil servants and teachers	Official courses including post-graduate courses leading to a master's or doctoral degree, initial and continuing vocational training which may take the form of seminars, practical work experience etc.	Continuing training must cover at least 15 hours with a maximum of 5 years. Government grants		
Finland	Private & public sector permanent and temporary workers, with a minimum of 3 months in the same job	Both general and vocational training for competence based qualifications	Maximum 2 years within a 7 year period. State training insurance scheme based		Unpaid educational leave, job rotation leave, parenthood allowance child home-care allowance
Sweden	Both private and public sector employees with at least 6 months in the same job	Both vocational and general education	Study leave starts from 1 hour every day, two days a week and so on to a total of 6 years full-time. Funding negotiated with employer or through adult study assistance programme		Unpaid educational leave based on collective agreements between employer and employee
United Kingdom	All sectors young employees aged 16 and 17 without Level 2 qualification	Training covers all Level 2 qualifications, e.g. competence, work, & school-based qualifications	Reasonable time-off – One day a week suggested as a yardstick. National traineeship funded by Government through the TECs	Between 9/1998 and 12/1999 about 30 000 persons under the National Traineeship programme	Unpaid educational leave operating on a voluntarist basis. No statutory framework
Iceland	Both private and public sector employees, also unemployed persons	Courses, seminars and conferences at the level of initial and continuing vocational training	There is no general rule or restriction on duration. Funding decided by social partners from a Training fund		Unpaid educational leave covered by agreements with the unions
Norway	Public and private sectors employees and workers including one-man businesses, freelancers and unemployed persons	Both basic primary & secondary education and work-related education & training	Maximum 3 years. Decided between employee and employer, State educational Loan Fund available	63	Unpaid educational leave

Again, the cases illustrated show a diversity of funding arrangements even within policies designed to achieve the same ends. Such diversity reflects both the various political cultures and institutional arrangements which exist across Europe. It may also reflect the inexact nature of apportioning responsibilities according to strict cost/benefit criteria, an area of research which is growing in the field of education and training.

2.4 Identifying the economic and social benefits of lifelong learning

Summary

Ultimately, achieving lifelong learning for all relies on the full participation of all social and economic stakeholders including governments, social partners, enterprises and individuals. A socio-political consensus on the importance of investing in people and ensuring commitment to foster this aim can only be achieved when the benefits are transparent and the costs of non-participation are clear. Governments at all levels must be able to justify to their electorates why certain budgetary choices are made. Similarly, social partners have to justify their budgetary decisions to their membership (including shareholders for enterprises). Individuals also must have a clear reason why they would want to invest additional funds in training as opposed to using their money elsewhere. An 'investment' should yield a return at some point in the future whether defined in economic and/or social or personal financial terms (i.e. there needs to be a gain either to the economy as a whole, or to the organisation or individual incurring the cost). Judgements over investment choices require that they be worthwhile, since the resources involved are scarce and potentially are capable of being employed in other areas.

For lifelong learning to become a reality, information clarifying the benefits from investment, and to whom they accrue, as well as making clear the costs involved, is at a premium. Yet methods for measuring the benefits of training are fraught with difficulties, not least because learning covers such a wide range of activities and the factors guiding individual decisions and needs to participate in training are so diverse. The following box summarises some of the studies undertaken to try and measure the returns to training for individuals and enterprises (OECD, 1998; Barrett et al., 1998; Green, 1997).

Evaluating the increased investments in continuing or lifelong learning is subject to uncertainty. The lack of reliable and precise information on the return side of investments in human capital formation is one of the basic reasons why indicators other than financial ones are being used for the measurement of returns. This is also the reason why non-financial reporting methods and benchmarking are utilised as proxy measures.

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Author	Study	Country	Outcome
Booth, A. (1991)	Survey of employees in 1987	UK	There is a positive relationship between training and wages (higher for women).
Laulhé, P. (1990)	Survey of employees in 1985	France	Employees who received some employer sponsored training were less likely to become unemployed and more likely to experience occupational mobility.
Mason et al. (1994)	Matched sample of biscuit manufacturers in France, Germany, Netherlands and UK	France, Germany, Netherlands and UK	That higher levels of productivity in Germany, France and the Netherlands were attributable to the lower levels of qualifications of UK workers and to less effective on-the-job training which resulted in a less flexible workforce.
Barrett and O'Connell (1997)	Survey of 200 Irish enterprises	Ireland	Investment in firm-specific training in 1993 had no measurable impact on productivity, measured in 1995. Investment in general training had a positive and significant impact on productivity over the same time period.
Ottersten et al. (1997)	Panel data set for small Swedish firms	Sweden	Training yields long-term increases in labour demand and net reductions in costs.
Alba-Ramirez, A. (1994)	Survey of 593 Spanish firms with more than 200 employees	Spain	There was a positive impact of training on productivity (between 2-3%).
De Koning, J. (1994)	Survey of 2 000 Dutch companies in 1988	Netherlands	Productivity could be improved by 10% if the training effort were doubled.
Elias, P. (1994)	Surveys of employers and employees in the UK	UK	Employer-provided formal or organised training reduced labour turnover especially amongst female workers.

Reporting on a company's human capital is one of the means to consider the aims of traditional shareholders as well as the interests of stakeholders. In order to take fully into account the notion of human capital, a more coherent theoretical and methodological framework must be established (OECD, 1998). International organisations and most national governments have not yet expressed a clear standpoint on a standardisation and dissemination of reporting tools, although they have expressed general support. Scandinavian governments and social partners and the Dutch government have begun to position themselves, generally along a stakeholder approach. It seems likely that human capital reporting frameworks with a minimum of standardised indicators will emerge. They will not become compulsory, at least in the short term, but will be promoted through financial, consultative and/or political incentives.

Frederiksen and Westphalen (1998) present a definition of the main elements in human resource accounting, identify the main stakeholders, and provide five case studies on reporting on human resources in the public and private sector in Denmark and Sweden.

Some studies have tried to quantify the macro-economic and social returns to investment in education and training, and there are suggestions that investment in basic level education will reduce the social and economic costs of, for example, crime, healthcare and unemployment. The number of variables involved quantifying such calculations, and comparing them to other available courses of action, means that policy making is an inexact science. Furthermore, the appropriateness of such calculations is questionable given that the aims of lifelong learning extend beyond the financial. For example, the traditional way to measure individual returns to learning investments is to measure their effects on lifetime earnings. Such calculations indicate that, for some, later life investment may reduce rather than increase this indicator, conditional upon a variety of circumstances. *Training and learning for competence: the second report on vocational training research in Europe* (Descy, Tessaring, forthcoming, 2001) analyses some research on the economic, social and individual benefits of education and training.

KEY MESSAGE 3: INNOVATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

European Commission *Memorandum* on lifelong learning

In order to be effective, methods of education and training should in future encourage learning in all contexts and at all stages of life. Besides their suitability for a range of situations, purposes, and people and needs, etc., they should be geared to the requirements of users and, first and foremost, strive for quality as well as results.

Where ICT is a central aspect of the relationship between teachers and learners, it has considerable potential for enhancing such methods. For example, it is conducive to independent learning, as well as open methods which fully involve learners themselves. However, the social dimension of learning should not be neglected.

The advent of novel teaching methods implies substantial reform of the initial and in-service training of teachers and trainers to prepare them for their new responsibilities, in particular by highlighting the unique contribution to learning of teachers as such.

Summary

The European Commission Memorandum on lifelong learning does not go into a discussion on how innovation in education and training should be defined. Neither is it intended to do so here. The term is used in the broad sense adopted daily by practitioners in the field.

For many years, European cooperation has made a substantial contribution to development and progress in innovation thanks in particular to the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes.

Action by the Member States in this area has taken two specific directions, namely the general modernisation of systems and specific measures for especially vulnerable target groups.

As regards the first trend, greater flexibility exists in most cases, partly as a result of ICT. This is evident where access is concerned (either because information about what is on offer is made available more efficiently, or because provision is directly broadened in a way that transcends its geographical availability). Flexibility is also conducive to independent learning and self-evaluation. With a suitable approach to teaching, it may also encourage the development of a critical outlook by providing easy access to a wide range of sources. The definition of quality criteria for the selection of appropriate software, on the other hand, is less developed, and studies to evaluate existing schemes are also uncommon.

As far as particularly vulnerable groups or those at risk are concerned, the personalised provision now possible thanks to more flexible systems is the main gateway to learning. It is sometimes used at an advanced level and attempts to take account of all (cognitive, psychological,

social and economic) difficulties faced by the foregoing groups of people. The entire range of accompanying measures is needed to provide the most comprehensive and permanent kinds of support in accordance with available resources.

Teacher training is an essential aspect of these developments and undergoing serious reconsideration. Here again, ICT is to the fore, either as a subject of training (usually from the technical angle) or in supporting communication among teachers (in networks, discussion groups, etc.). Provision for trainers appears less common than in the case of teachers.

Actions at European level

A range of initiatives has been taken recently at both national and European level on the issue of upgrading and updating teachers' skills. At European level, one of the main objectives of the **eLearning initiative** is to train European teachers in digital technologies and speed up the networking of them.

Furthermore, the Commission supports a 'thematic network' on teachers under the Socrates programme. Projects within **thematic networks** aim to define and develop a European dimension within a given academic discipline or other issues of common interest (including administrative issues) through cooperation between university faculties or departments, academic or professional associations and other partners. The purpose of the proposed Thematic Network in Teacher Education (TNTE) is to establish a flexible multilingual transnational forum for the study, analysis and development of teacher education linking as many universities and other institutions together as possible. At present TNTE has over 150 partners. The network consists of members from all the EU countries, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the USA and is endorsed by the Compostela Group and the National Education Research Associations in England and Germany. The objective of the TNTE is to create a permanent and flexible structure whereby cooperation and sharing of information can be enhanced and ameliorated in order to emphasise and strengthen the European dimension in teacher education. The structure is democratic and built from below. TNTE wants to establish a forum for dissemination of ideas, reports, projects and other forms of cooperation via the Internet in terms of a multilingual web site to be maintained and continuously expanded in scope (discussion groups, standing conferences, new languages added etc.). The use of new technology to facilitate communication and to exchange ideas and results is a key strategic objective within the proposed TNTE. The latter will also provide a case to evaluate the scope and limits of information technology application in relation to present development in that field within the Member States.

The outlined sub-projects include:

- the development of innovative strategies of cooperation between teacher education institutions and the education system in the community/region;

- the development of innovative systems in teacher education including open and distance learning;
- improved quality in teacher education, and the development of procedures to describe and evaluate various teacher education programmes in different member states;
- alternative strategies in analysing and comparing teacher education systems;
- professionalism and flexibility, devolution and sites of professional training, national identity and teacher education;
- teacher educators and policy-making;
- relations between initial teacher education, induction programmes and in-service teacher education.

The Commission has also entrusted the Eurydice Network with **a study on the attractiveness, profile and occupational content of the teaching profession**. The contributions from the National Units of the Eurydice Network will form the basis of this analysis. In order to collect the national information required to cover all the parameters to be examined, questionnaires are being devised by the European Eurydice Unit in close consultation with the National Units. These questionnaires give precise definitions and instructions to ensure that the collection of data is harmonised and comparable.

The study will provide a historical and contextual analysis of the development of the situation: the purpose of this part is to support and supplement the descriptive analysis with the historical and contextual framework, allowing for a better understanding of the changes which have occurred, ongoing debate or reforms currently under discussion, and the reasons for these changes as well as the intended objectives. In broad terms, this means:

- describing and explaining recent and ongoing reforms pertaining to the issues studied and the selected parameters;
- giving the political, social, economic and demographic context so that the reasons for these trends may be properly understood;
- presenting national evaluations and investigations of a rigorous standard which have succeeded in measuring the scale of a given problem, the effects of reforms and the causes of those reforms.

The national contributions necessary to this line of analysis are entrusted to experts nominated at national level in close consultation with the members of the Socrates Committee. A guide has been prepared for them to identify and orientate the main questions.

The topics covered by the study will be initial training, transition and follow-up between initial training and professional life, teacher supply, in-service training, salaries, conditions of service and promotion. The analysis will be targeted on the full-time compulsory secondary level. The study will only include the situation of teachers in the public sector, that is to say those working in schools that are provided and controlled directly by public authorities. The comparative analysis will take 2000/2001 as its reference year. The historical framework of reforms (contextual analysis) will be limited to the last 25 years. The study covers the 30 countries in the Eurydice Network (corresponding to 34 National Units).

TTnet (Training of Trainers Network) is a Community forum for communication, cooperation and expertise in the training of teachers and trainers of vocational training. Set up by Cedefop in 1998, it groups together national networks, made up of institutions and organisations specialising in the training of trainers. It has two objectives:

- to foster at national level the development of teachers' and trainers' competences as a key element in the quality of vocational training systems;
- to organise dialogue at transnational level to ensure that the professionalisation of trainers becomes an aspect of Community VET policy in its own right.

Changes in the tasks and skills of trainers have a strategic importance, especially given that the various Member States are planning to upgrade the professional status of trainers. For this reason, TTnet chose to focus its initial work on three areas:

- innovation, seen as a transferable practice central to the process of change in training trades;
- tutoring, seen as a convergence point for the formulation of a European policy to step up the professional status of trainers;
- changes in the professional role of trainers (Brugia and de Blignières, 2000).

Discussions within TTnet have so far concentrated on three dimensions that are helping to modify the roles and skills of VET professionals:

- the development of learning organisations;
- the emphasis that is being placed on competences and non-formal learning;
- the impact of the new information and communication technologies.

Cedefop guides and coordinates the multinational dimension to the network and also has the task of developing the network's Community added value, which it does by launching studies on the *horizontal* themes, following up specific publications, helping to define the Community strategy on the training of trainers and promoting the network (www.trainingvillage.gr).

3.1 Developing high-quality user-oriented and adaptable learning systems for different groups of active learners

Summary

Institutions are joining forces to meet the differing needs of groups of learners more effectively. Courses are sometimes prepared in close cooperation with them. Unusually flexible education and training schemes which provide for regular alternation between training courses and professional or related activity are being established.

Methods and courses are increasingly being tailored to individual needs, particularly in the case of young people or adults who have repeatedly experienced failure at school or in trying to undertake professional activity. This approach is provisional when the aim is to compensate for certain shortcomings, or developed on a longer-term basis in attempts to deal with more

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critical circumstances. While there is considerable scope for practical experience in courses, theoretical explanations are not overlooked and are used to solve problems encountered in practical activity. Workplace learning is at present a particularly fashionable approach.

Efforts to achieve arrangements that are more flexible or more geared to individual requirements, as well as concern for the wishes of learners, are also a way of improving their motivation. Exchange visits, within a particular country or abroad, discussion groups, self-evaluation, the availability of tutors, the adaptation of courses to the needs of the labour market, supporting measures including provision for people entering or returning to professional activity, and social and psychological assistance, etc. are all evidence of the effort being invested in attracting potential learners into education/training schemes and keeping them there.

Within institutions, specific measures are sometimes introduced to support teachers in applying and evaluating innovative practice. Special bodies (such as expert committees, national boards, etc.) are appointed to consider issues from a more theoretical standpoint.

▶ In order to meet the differing needs of adult learners more effectively in Denmark, **many education and training institutions are encouraged to take an active part in training them.** Courses have to be developed in cooperation with them so as to really meet their needs and offer them the time and space flexibility they require. Teaching methods also have to be adapted to their requirements. Adult education institutions are encouraged to support firms that plan courses when the latter feel they are needed. The same institutions are being urged generally to step up their cooperation with other partners and use ICT.

Many ***produktionsskole*** (production schools) have been set up to promote labour market integration of unemployed low-skilled young people. Young people normally attend the production schools for 12 months, but they can leave the school at any time if they have found a job or a training place. Over 5 000 young(er) unemployed people currently attend the 107 Danish production schools. The innovative aspect of the *produktionsskole* is the fact that teaching and training do not take the form of a fixed curriculum or modules, but follow outlines, in which training is tailored to students' individual needs. The basic concept involves learning jobs and activities by carrying them out, i.e. learning by doing. At the point when problems arise in a work stage, subject-specific theoretical instruction is provided, with the aim of solving or overcoming the problem. For example, if there is a problem with calculating quantities of wood or different measures for pieces of wood and items of furniture, a mathematics lesson is provided. The fields of work and activity are often selected in collaboration with companies. Activities are learned and then routinely carried out. This training is often combined with teaching of multimedia skills and languages. Areas of instruction covered by all production schools, to a varying extent, in the context of this problem-oriented approach to learning are Danish, social studies, mathematics and current affairs. Some schools have a strong environmental orientation. Students at many production schools can undergo a period of practical training in (local) public or private companies. In addition, student exchange visits within and outside Denmark are organised as part of the schools' activities. The production schools

cover approximately one-fifth of their financing requirement through services and by manufacturing products for the local market. The remainder of the funding is provided by the State.

- In the Spanish province of Murcia, the transnational ***Prodyouth*** project is currently endeavouring to establish a production school based on the example of the Danish model. The aspect that is particularly innovative for Spain is the motivation-oriented alternative learning concept, designed to motivate young people much more strongly to learn and to work to acquire skills than is the case in the *Escuelas de Taller* (Spanish 'workshop schools') set up for excluded young people. Motivation of young people constitutes a fundamental problem in many *Escuelas de Taller*. However, even those which operate efficiently do not usually reach the level of skills training and motivation to learn achieved in the Danish production schools. This initiative is focusing on the acquisition of knowledge and performance of activities in biological agriculture, landscape conservation and rural tourism. One area on which it is concentrating is the provision of knowledge of new technologies in agriculture and their practical application. In addition to the problem of securing long-term financing for this project, the legal framework conditions constitute a particular obstacle, since they prohibit schools in Spain from being geared to profit. In order to fulfil the legal criteria, an association founded for the purposes of this project is to carry out these activities. The pilot phase of the project has largely been financed by the Youthstart Community Initiative (*Asociacion Columbares, Proyecto transnacional Prodyouth*; columbares@distrito.com).

- In France, the ***Nouvelles chances*** ('fresh opportunities') programme (also referred to among the actions for guidance and counselling, see the *Memorandum*, Key Message 5) relies on new methodologies in which considerable importance is attached to the needs of individual learners, in order to achieve its aims. This scheme is for young people who leave a class in lower secondary education, special education or the first year of preparation for a *brevet d'études professionnelles* (BEP, or 'vocational studies certificate') or a *certificat d'aptitude professionnelle* (CAP, or 'certificate of vocational aptitude'), as well as those who drop out after one year at a general or technological *lycée*, or who do so while actually completing compulsory schooling – a group whose numbers are very difficult to determine accurately. The programme seeks to offer these young people patterns of training geared to their individual needs and, wherever possible, to ensure a joint contribution by schools and business to qualifying and integrating them. The scheme is particularly concerned to avoid breakdowns in individual schooling at the *collège* stage (lower secondary education) and to provide training courses leading to the CAP. It is governed by three principles:
  - 'made-to-measure' courses and responses to the individual needs of each young person, given that the difficulties and causes of school drop-out are varied and complex;
  - scope for initiative and support for innovation by upgrading the contribution of teachers working together in the field, giving their projects, methods and results a higher profile, analysing and evaluating their experience, and identifying the different kinds of problem they encounter (financial arrangements, legal difficulties, a narrow regulatory framework, etc.);
  - action in partnership between central government departments, regional and local authorities, associations and the world of work (firms and occupational sectors) to assist

young people in their transition from school to working life by means of an ongoing joint effort on the part of schools and firms.

The main aims of the programme are as follows:

- prevent *collège* drop-out through a variety of measures (personalised support for each pupil in daily classroom activity, introduction of special support classes and *classes relais,* ([17]) etc.);
- facilitate access to qualifications for pupils in sections for 'adapted' general and vocational education, by offering three-quarters of young people in adapted education opportunities, within three years, to continue their training in vocational *lycées*, apprenticeship training centres, or regional schools for adapted education (public-sector institutions which take in residential pupils, and may combine the teaching facilities of a primary school, *collège*, vocational *lycée* and general *lycée*);
- reduce regional inequalities in this area by means of a survey to identify current deficiencies, and reforming the sections for 'adapted' general and vocational education;
- develop pilot locations for looking after and reintegrating children under 16 who have missed compulsory schooling (six ongoing pilot projects);
- develop post-*collège* patterns of training for qualifications, by maintaining and diversifying stage-by-stage certification procedures for the CAP, through the establishment of networks of vocational *lycées;*
- diversify level 5 ([18]) training provision by making it denser, taking qualitative aspects more fully into account, and developing partnerships with firms and the regions through the joint preparation of multiannual training plans;
- bring the 'fresh opportunities' programme within the scope of similarly directed European initiatives.

In general, young people with learning difficulties will receive personalised assistance while attending *collège*, at which experiments will also be conducted with interdisciplinary learning. Supervised personal schoolwork will serve the same purpose in *lycées*. The *Conseil national pour la réussite scolaire* (National Council for School Achievement) has been set up to evaluate, support and promote innovative practice.

▶ In Italy, the Ministry of Education has recently started to **reorganise and enhance the adult education system**. Under this initiative, individual information and guidance, as well as cultural assistance, have to be provided for the purpose of facilitating the social integration of adults. Action is structured in ways most likely to encourage personalised provision for adult learning, through modular learning pathways and the recognition of knowledge and skills regardless of where and how they have been acquired. Recognition and certification, including the award of credits, are based on transparent criteria.

([17]) These are 'simulation' classes to provide young people who have dropped out of school with special temporary assistance enabling them to envisage a gradual return to normal schooling.
([18]) Following the ISCED classification (International Standard Classification of Education).

- The **Job Factory** in Austria is a project funded by the Federal Social Welfare Office for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland, the European Social Fund, the Youth Labour Market Service and the Vienna municipal authorities. It is noteworthy for its early, preventive intervention approach and its specific target group: young people who, due to various circumstances or problems, have not gained any lower secondary school qualifications or who attended special schools. An initial survey revealed that *A central feature of the Job Factory is the project-based continual guidance in the working environment, which focuses concurrently on social integration and integration into the labour market. This combination seems to achieve what it sets out to and represents a methodological breakthrough compared to projects with similar objectives* (Obermayr/Stuppäck, 1999, p. 385). The idea was born out of the increasingly difficult situation faced by young people in the Austrian labour market, due, among other things, to the drop in training opportunities. A generally difficult situation hits disadvantaged young people particularly hard. They become increasingly marginalised. Their prospects on the labour and training markets sink even lower. The lack of lower secondary school qualifications bars these young people from attending further education schools. The competition on the vocational training market is very tough, often too tough, particularly for disadvantaged young people. Furthermore, classic apprenticeship training conducted without special support programmes can result in young people being cognitively overtaxed. In normal Labour Market Service programmes for young people – training, employment, job search training, etc. – competition among lower secondary school leavers is usually very fierce. The concept for the *Job Factory* project therefore started in 1996 as part of the People's Welfare/employment initiatives. The target group comprises young people between the ages of 15 and 17 who because of learning disabilities or stunted development are not mature enough to cope with a job straight after completing compulsory schooling, but who would not achieve their full potential in traditional approaches such as occupational therapy. Involvement in work projects which function like normal companies and execute orders from customers, as in the real world of work, motivates participants and gives them the skills they need. Young people can choose between five areas, namely catering, building renovation, cooking, communication and waiting in the hotel and restaurant sector. These areas incorporate a one- to two-year period of work experience combined with remedial education, social and psychological counselling, etc. A good placement is succeeded by follow-up supervision in the young person's place of work. This continues for around six months to ensure long-term integration. The basic idea of the project is to use authentic projects developed and conducted with the participation of young people to give them vocational and interpersonal skills. The project design incorporated the findings of a survey of special school graduates in order to cater for their needs.

- In upper secondary education in Sweden, there are also **individualised programmes** to help those who encounter difficulties in pursuing education at this level. For young people with little motivation or who are uncertain about their choice of subjects, these programmes give individual follow-up, by identifying the supplementary assistance they need with subjects which they have found difficult in compulsory education. The aim is that pupils who have fallen behind in such subjects should continue their upper secondary education in a national programme (i.e. one that is not made to measure) when they have recovered the lost ground.

Incorporating workplace learning

European governments are intensively trying to bring vocational education and training closer to the labour market by organising new forms of on-the-job training and workplace training, as well as by involving employers more actively. On-the-job training improves the desirability of vocational education, brings institutions and workplaces closer together and keeps vocational education contents, teachers and students up-to-date with the changing requirements of working life. Member states are trying to promote and develop broader skills in both theory and practice required for working life and actual needs in the local labour market, and hoping that this will have a positive impact on employment recruitment and the employability of people.

- When full-time schooling comes to an end in Belgium, at the age of 15 or 16, pupils may choose courses from a scaled-down timetable by enrolling at a Centre for Part-Time Education (CDO) in the Flemish Community, or a *Centre d'Éducation et de Formation en Alternance* (CEFA, or centre for linked work and education/training) in the French Community. Attached to schools providing full-time secondary education, these centres offer courses comprising 50-minute periods spread over 40 weeks a year in a CDO, and over 20 weeks annually in a CEFA, with one part devoted to general training and the other to preparation for a particular occupation. At the end of each year, pupils receive a certificate testifying to the skills acquired and, if they pass a qualification exam, a 'qualification' certificate.

- Similarly in Italy, now that part-time education has been made compulsory up to the age of 18, this obligation may be fulfilled by attending apprenticeship or alternated work and training. Training and guidance stages have been introduced to provide for **periods of alternate work and learning activities**, so that it is easier to choose from vocational options on the basis of direct working experience. This initiative is especially intended for those who have completed compulsory education.

- The Netherlands has **dual trajectories** in secondary vocational education, both comprising an element of workplace learning: *bol*, a preparatory vocational trajectory in full-time secondary vocational education in combination with 20-60% practical training, and *bbl*, a work-based vocational training trajectory in combination with 20-40% day release study. Tertiary level vocational education, HBO *(hoger beroepsonderwijs)* has also encouraged dual pathways, particularly in the initial phase. HOOP 2000, the higher education and research plan, calls for the dual trajectory in higher education to be strengthened, not only in VET. In the context of lifelong learning, dual learning and working models should result in shorter phases of initial higher education followed by recurrent periods of learning and work.

- In Finland, all three-year (120 credits) initial vocational qualifications include a minimum of half-a-year (20 credits) of on-the-job training taken as one or more on-the-job training periods. Apprenticeship training also exists and consists of practical studies connected to the actual job, supplemented by theoretical studies. The share of on-the-job and in-house

training is about 70-80% of total study time. Guidelines for competence-based qualifications or core curricula, validated by the National Board of Education, form the basis of apprenticeship training. Individual learning programmes are tailored to suit all apprentices. Previous studies and work experience are taken into account when planning individual learning programmes.

- In Sweden, at least 15% of total student time in vocationally-oriented upper secondary programmes is spent at the workplace, while in theoretical programmes this module is optional. In the 1996-2001 period, an ongoing **pilot project for advanced vocational education (KY)** is attaching special importance to workplace learning in post-secondary education. KY courses should combine a practical orientation and in-depth theoretical knowledge with the aim of trying out new post-secondary courses, teaching methods and training arrangements. Training should take place in a familiar environment and provide a broader experience than in-house company training. Education in KY projects is post-secondary. It is targeted at upper secondary school leavers or people already employed who wish to develop their skills (Boström et al., 2001). As a result of a Parliament decision, KY is to become a permanent activity from January 2002.

  In order to incorporate practical experience more effectively into education and training programmes, a **Memorandum on Cooperation between Schools and the World of Work** *(Samverkan mellan skola och arbetsliv – om möjligheterna med lärande i arbete)* was published in November 2000. A think tank has been set up within the Ministry of Education and Science to exploit the potential of work-based learning in upper secondary education and cater more effectively for new labour market demand. The think tank has suggested the establishment of a work-based learning pilot project which amounts to a novel form of apprenticeship and an alternative way of conducting a national or individually adjusted initial vocational training programme. The National Education Agency, *Skolverket*, has thus developed a new syllabus for the pilot project which reflects this approach. Its aim is to provide learners with more extensive professional experience and greater knowledge in their selected field. The course also seeks to develop their ability to think and act for themselves. Yet a further objective is to develop their social and communication skills as part of their preparation for entering professional circles in their own sector of activity. If the findings of this pilot experiment are conclusive, it will be used as a fresh basis for the future development of post-secondary vocational education.

- In the United Kingdom, the **School Standards and Framework Act 1998** extended pupils' eligibility for work experience in England and Wales to the final two years of compulsory education. Work placements are on the employer's premises and pupils carry out a range of tasks or duties similar to employees, but with emphasis on the learning aspects. Pupils normally have two weeks' work experience and those under school leaving age may take part only in schemes for which arrangements have been made or approved, as part of a pupil's education, by the Local Education Authority (LEA). Similar arrangements have been introduced in Northern Ireland under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

The Government has recently announced an **expansion of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme** in England which will create an entitlement to an apprenticeship place for all young people who can meet the required standards. Foundation Modern Apprenticeships are a work-based training option for young people and employers leading to a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level two. Advanced Modern Apprenticeships, which were introduced earlier, lead to an NVQ level three. Training frameworks have now been developed in over 80 sectors of employment. In Wales, the existing age limit (25) on the completion of Modern Apprenticeships will be removed.

In recent years, the DfEE has funded **a range of development activities with higher education institutions** in England, employers and others to enhance the employability of graduates and boost higher education's contribution to the economy. In many cases, this has encouraged higher education and business to work more closely together, so that the former understands employers' needs and business recognises more of the benefits of working with higher education. Development projects have included the creation of new kinds of partnership and institutional structure, frameworks for accreditation, techniques for teaching and assessment, and the development and piloting of new models of service delivery.

In April 1998, the DfEE initiated a further round of development activity under the **Higher Education and Employment Development Programme** to explore issues related to people's preparation for work while in higher education, their transition from higher education to the workplace and the extent of subsequent support for lifelong learning. There are 55, mainly two-year, projects covering eight themes: key skills in higher education; recording achievement; work experience; guidance for graduates; high level lifelong learning; labour market intelligence in higher education; graduate business start-ups; and innovation and creativity in the curriculum. The *Higher Education Reach-out to Business and the Community Fund* was launched in June 1999. The scheme seeks to encourage higher education institutions in England and Northern Ireland to respond to the needs of business and to contribute to economic growth and competitiveness, whilst improving opportunities for graduate employment, through innovative proposals. Separate measures exist in Wales and Scotland.

Graduate Apprenticeships are currently being piloted. These schemes combine work-based learning with higher education for the purpose of enhancing graduate employability and addressing skills shortages. The programme is particularly targeted at employees in small and medium-sized businesses, who can receive free tuition to study part-time for Higher National Certificates and Diplomas or first degrees in a relevant area.

3.2 Develop teaching and learning methods based substantially on ICT

Summary

ICT is a valuable resource for putting more flexible, motivating and personalised programmes and schemes into practice. Using ICT to secure access to a much more extensive range of courses than those locally available, for example, is believed to increase motivation to embark on and persevere with a course. Schools, higher education institutions and libraries are thus all increasingly taking steps to obtain computers and Internet connections. Accompanying measures have involved the provision of administrative staff, teachers, pupils and students with e-mail addresses. Yet although such schemes to enhance facilities are proliferating, it is not always easy to determine the impact they will have on teaching activities.

Educational content in electronic form is gradually undergoing development and specialised research centres are being established. At their best, these initiatives are coupled with identification of evaluation and selection criteria to guarantee the high quality of educational products made available to teachers and learners.

Besides the provision of facilities and the development of educational software, ICT is also of value in establishing inventories of available products and programmes and stimulating the activity of teacher and trainer networks. It also facilitates individual learning strategies in which learners assume responsibility for their activity.

- **Digital campuses have been established** in France. On 11 October 2000, in Paris, the universities, engineering *grandes écoles* and the *Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres* (IUFMs, or university teacher training institutes), together with the *Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance* (CNED, or National Centre for Distance Education), signed a cooperation agreement to develop higher level distance training using digital production and distribution techniques. The agreement covers all types of training. Distance facilities may be used to study for university initial and continuing training qualifications. As a result of the general extension of digital techniques in education, it will also be possible to modernise conventional branches of study and develop on-line provision of lifelong learning for everyone.

- In Ireland, the **FAS Net College** currently offers 18 courses in business, computer software, web design and computer technical support, which are continuously updated to reflect demands in the labour market. Apart from web-based training, the College provides supportive learning systems such as the network of learners, discussion groups, self-assessments and on-line tutor support for most of the courses. The courses are available to everyone with Internet access, irrespective of employment status or country of origin. The average duration of a course is 80-100 hours and the learner is provided with unlimited access for a period of six months to learn at his/her own pace. A study skills course is provided free of charge to aid participants with their studies along with on-line tutor support, while nearly all the courses have an industry-recognised certification option.

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- In Italy, there has been considerable investment in the development of ICT in schools through the ***National Plan for Educational Technologies***. Following the completion of the first three-year period (1997-2000), the plan has been extended for the next three years (2000-2003). Its aims are to promote the acquisition of ICT skills by students, to improve the effectiveness of teaching/learning processes and the organisation of teaching activities, and to strengthen the professional skills of teachers by providing in-service training and, more importantly, the necessary tools and services. The initiative includes two sub-programmes, namely A (operational unit for teachers) and B (multimedia in the classroom), and relates to every aspect of ICT, including its integration. Accordingly, all schools are being connected to the Internet by the year 2001. In the field of vocational training, agencies have been restructured in order to become accredited operational centres in a process that involves upgrading and developing ICT equipment. With regard to the training of ICT trainers, the Ministry of Labour has launched the FADOL programme (*Formazione a Distanza On Line*, or 'On-Line Distance Training'), which is co-financed by the European Social Fund and aimed at developing ICT equipment and updating the skills of ICT trainers.

- In Austria, action is being undertaken to develop **on-line educational content**. The aim is to prepare and provide teachers and students with course materials and information about digitally-based training. Criteria for selecting and evaluating platforms or systems for managing learning are to be drawn up, first of all, for schools, higher education institutions and universities. Educational content packages for individual learning are to be built up with the help of content providers. All educational content on the Internet (whether it can be consulted free of charge by anybody, or prior registration is required as in the case of apprenticeship courses) will be accessed via a single address by means of an Internet home page established before the end of 2002. Educational content pages will be regularly updated and teachers will be helped to use these resources in their courses. Educational content will be prepared by teachers on the electronic platforms of universities or firms so that each student can follow the content of a course at any point in time (this measure applies in particular to remedial course examinations). Apprenticeship based on distance education will be introduced in training sectors where demand is especially high (as in the case of HTL/*Fachschule für EDV und Organisation* provision). In general, the best forms of good practice will be extensively promoted.

  Furthermore, **scientific centres specialising in ICT** are to be set up so that universities can make more extensive use of new technologies, particularly in the area of *e-learning*. Research and Development centres for ICT skills are to be established in the universities and higher education colleges. Innovative ventures in basic and applied research in competitive national sectors (such as software development and security measures) will be encouraged in close cooperation with the industrial sector. In practice, the *Wissenschafts- und Forschungsstandort Graz* project (Graz, centre for science and research) will enable ICT research to be concentrated in the most suitable locations for this purpose (as in the case of the *Grazer Konsortium* involving cooperation between the *Forschungszentrum Joanneum*, the Technical University of Graz and the University of Graz). A Software Institute is

to be set up in Graz and a computer science centre in Innsbruck. A baccalaureate in software technology is to be created and the *Forums Neue Medien* (New Media Forums) for learning in universities and colleges are to be continued.

- In Finland, the *Information Strategy for Education and Research 2000-2004* sets important objectives for the teaching profession. The first is **to create an information strategy for each institution**. The aim has been that all teacher education units should devise a strategy for the educational use of ICT by 2001, and that all educational establishments should do so by 2002. Another aim is that **over half of all staff in education should have the knowledge and skills needed to use ICT for teaching purposes**, and that a large number of teachers should have at least basic ICT skills. In the initial and further education of teachers, the emphasis is on the significance of the whole school community in the development of educational ICT. Besides upgrading an individual teacher's professional skills, in-service training should serve the entire school. A staff development and training plan should therefore be part of the strategy for the educational use of ICT.

  Teacher training has been devised as a three-step **OPE.FI project**. The first step is concerned with knowledge of the common uses of a computer, mastery of word processing, Internet browsers and e-mail, and an understanding of the principles underlying ICT educational applications. These are skills to be mastered by all teachers. The second step focuses on skills in the actual use of ICT for educational purposes, which at least half of them should master. They include versatile use of e-mail, the World Wide Web environment and groupware, as well as generic tools, teaching applications and digital material for the appropriate school subject, and a good grasp of principles governing the production of digital learning material. On completion of this second step, teachers can normally follow developments in hardware and software and are well aware of social problems and challenges associated with ICT.

  The third step relates to specialised knowledge, which about 10% of teachers should master. This knowledge comprises content-specific and professional applications, the production of digital learning materials, institutional information management, and an ability to assist, support and train colleagues, help develop the school community and act as part of an expert network. In all, OPE.FI corresponds to some 15 credits. The education and training involved are jointly provided by the universities, polytechnics and the National Board of Education.

- **A distance education pilot project in upper secondary education** (known as *Förordning om försöksverksamhet med distansundervisning i gymnasieskolan*) is being developed in Sweden, for the purpose in particular of **boosting motivation** to take up courses. On 6 April 2000, the government adopted a regulation under which ICT enables pupils to follow courses to which they would not otherwise have access because they are not offered by schools in their municipality. This broader range of education and training opportunities is diversifying the options available and making it possible to cater for areas of interest to learners, in the hope that they will be motivated to engage in subsequent learning

activity. The project is a way of using ICT as a resource for a more flexible form of education.

In 1998, the Swedish government launched an initiative for developing new methods of distance education for adults, based on ICT. The **SSV** (National Schools for Adults) – which are also referred to among the initiatives for bringing learning closer to the learners (see *Memorandum* Key Message 6) – were part of the task force responsible for launching projects to develop new methods and support for flexible learning, such as:

- training courses in methodology for trainers involved in adult distance education;
- a catalogue of distance learning resources, comprising an inventory of what is available at local level and could be more widely used; the project is also developing general support functions such as a model of flexible organisation in education, validation, guidance and careers counselling, etc.;
- advanced distance learning tools based on ICT;
- a network of local study centres involving the development of methods of cooperation between different training providers and formal environments or external systems to broaden the availability of adult training;
- updated models of distance courses offered in a variety of forms depending on the different styles of student learning; cooperation between teachers and technological experts for the development of personalised learning strategies;
- language courses for young deaf people: production of courses in English and Swedish to help them become familiar with distance learning;
- access via an Internet address to information concerning all projects in this pilot programme and the creation of a common platform for national resources in distance education.

▶ In the United Kingdom, the government is investing heavily in a number of ICT initiatives. The **National Grid for Learning** (NGfL) refers both to an educational portal, or gateway web site, and the programme for providing schools and other institutions with appropriate infrastructure. Its aims are:

- to provide a national learning resource to help raise educational standards and, in particular, to meet the government's literacy and numeracy targets and improve the quality of life and Britain's international competitiveness;
- to deliver high quality educational software and services to teachers, pupils and other learners through public/private partnerships;
- to remove barriers to learning to ensure equality of access for all, including those in isolated rural areas, those with special educational needs or those in areas of urban deprivation;
- to provide an information and learning resource for teachers to improve their ICT skills.

As a result of the NGfL in Scotland, all Scottish schools and libraries will be connected to the Internet by 2002 and all teachers and pupils will have an e-mail address. The NGfL will also lead to schools having one modern computer for every 5 secondary pupils and one modern computer for every 7.5 primary pupils, and will enhance the computer skills

of pupils and teachers. Since the end of September 2000, 81% of primary schools and all secondary schools have secured Internet access, while 47% of primary school staff and 29% of their pupils and 79% of secondary school staff and 66% of their pupils have access to an e-mail address. It is also intended that, under the NGfL, high quality educational materials should be made available over the Internet to schools, teachers, course administrators, pupils, students and all learners. And although the initiative has begun in the schools and colleges, the NGfL is additionally planning to provide Internet access for all sectors of lifelong education and training.

The **Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)** promotes the innovative application and use of information systems and information technology in higher education and further education across the United Kingdom, by providing vision and leadership and funding the network infrastructure, communications and information technology (C&IT) and information services, development projects and educational materials. The JISC sets out its detailed objectives in a five-year rolling strategy. The proposed strategy for 2001-2005 aims to achieve the following:

- build an on-line information environment providing secure and convenient access to a comprehensive collection of scholarly and educational material;
- help institutions create and maintain managed learning environments to support students;
- ensure the continued provision of, and wide access to, a world leading network to support research and education in the UK;
- provide a range of advisory and consultancy services in the use of ICT;
- promote innovation in the use of ICT to benefit learning and teaching, research and the management of institutions;
- improve staff and student skills in the exploitation of ICT, particularly in their use of the Internet;
- support the regional and community agenda of institutions through the Metropolitan Area Networks and Regional Support Centres;
- provide a focus for collaboration between UK educational IT initiatives to help create a wider information-literate society;
- promote and facilitate international collaboration in the exploitation of ICT.

The **ICT for Learning** strategy in Wales aims to raise standards of attainment in schools across Wales, improve ICT skills, support lifelong learning and help tackle social disadvantage by securing universal access to ICT. The strategy covers the three-year period from 1999/2000 to 2001/2002. Under this initiative, ICT learning centres in schools and community centres are being set up, laptops are being provided for teachers, and specific initiatives are being developed to help disadvantaged communities and pupils with special needs.

A **Strategy for Education Technology** in Northern Ireland was originally issued by the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI), now the Department of Education (DE) in October 1997. Its aims are:

- to give all schools a common infrastructure of equipment and on-line educational service through a managed service;

- to provide training for teachers to enable them to be personally competent in using ICT equipment and materials, and also to integrate ICT into both their teaching and the learning of their pupils;
- to provide schools with curriculum content, professional support and guidance on the most effective use of ICT in teaching and learning and school administration and management;
- to enable pupils to live, learn and work in the information society.

Information Learning Technology (ILT) in Further Education in Northern Ireland aims to ensure that students are given the opportunity to develop ICT skills and competences. Measures taken include:

- staff development – to ensure that all teachers are competent in the use of ICT for teaching and learning;
- the development of colleges' internal network infrastructure to allow them to exploit fully the potential of ICT for learning;
- curriculum development to ensure the continued development of ICT-based curriculum material;
- networking – to create a high bandwidth further and higher education network which will facilitate partnership between the sectors.

3.3 Supporting a new role for teachers and trainers

Summary

Teachers, trainers and sometimes other categories of educational staff (such as instructors and supervisors, etc.) are benefiting from special training schemes, particularly in the field of ICT, for which specialised centres are coming into existence. In higher education, teachers are being trained, for example, by having to confront groups of learners who are different in terms of their needs and background.

ICI is a subject for training in its own right and backed by major campaigns to heighten awareness of it. In some systems, computer science teachers are trained to provide assistance with the development and maintenance of school networks, as well as to help other teachers who are not specialists in this field.

Systems with staff shortages are also taking action to attract candidates to the teaching profession, including reforms in training or conditions of employment, campaigns to target new groups of people or heighten awareness of the need for continuing training, etc.

Something more than a reform of teacher training may be needed for teachers to assume their new role. Measures to reorganise the way schools work are sometimes necessary, as in cases

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in which they are given greater autonomy to encourage improved cooperation between teachers at different levels of the system.

Initiatives for the benefit of trainers which have been identified are uncommon, notwithstanding measures to formally consolidate the professional status of their occupation.

- The government of the Flemish Community of Belgium has commissioned ***Regionale Expertisenetwerken*** **(REN,** or **Regional Expertise Networks)** to provide supply and demand-driven in-service training. Five such networks have been launched so far. Each REN consists of at least one department for teacher training at an officially recognised university or school for higher education. These networks have a twofold responsibility in that they offer a wide range of in-service training, as well as a technical assistance helpdesk.

- The Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Security has issued a ministerial decision that regulates the procedures for the development of a **register of continuing vocational training trainers**. ([*]) The decision defines the terms, requirements and specifications that trainers should meet in order to be registered and will include trainers' personal data, formal qualifications, and teaching and varied occupational experience. Development of the register is expected to ensure the quality and effective operation of training programmes. It is also expected that the qualifications of the registered trainers will be upgraded through certified training programmes organised especially for them, thus providing necessary pedagogical knowledge, abilities and skills. The Ministry also aims to promote digital literacy and the use of ICT by teachers and trainers, since registered trainers will be obliged to have a European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) that will certify their computer competence. The task of developing the register will be undertaken by the EKEPIS (National Accreditation Centre of Vocational Training Structures and Services).

- In Italy, the national adult education programme includes **special actions for improving the in-service training of teachers and trainers**. Such actions are defined in the national agreement for each professional category, in accordance with the financial resources available. A top priority is the joint training of teachers and trainers with professionals working in the different training systems, in order to improve skills in areas relating, for example, to the training contract, tutorial help, modular teaching, integrated planning, networking and literacy, etc.

- In the Netherlands, the **need to provide for the ongoing career development of teachers** (to ensure implementation of innovative teaching concepts) prompted the government policy document, *Lifelong Learning: The Dutch Initiative*, to boost teacher employability. Nonetheless, recent policy discussions have been dominated by the very serious shortfall in the number of teachers available in the Dutch education system, especially in the large cities. In its

([*]) Source: OEEK (a body for education and vocational training).

1999 policy document *Tailor-made Solutions for Tomorrow*, the government announced a comprehensive programme to deal with this issue. Measures proposed included raising the numbers of people entering teacher training, opening up the labour market in education, new ways of recruiting teachers, reform of teacher training, quality systems, and improving personnel policies and the conditions of employment. A relatively successful strategy has been the national **campaign to encourage ex-teachers** – especially married women – to return to teaching following a course of retraining and work experience (a similar campaign is now under way in the United Kingdom). Also proving successful is the new **temporary law on horizontal transition** *(Interim Wet zij-instroom)*, which encourages people to (partly) leave jobs in other sectors and to train as teachers (in later life). Teacher training colleges provide short dual trajectories in this context in cooperation with schools and placement agencies. Finally, in order to update and upgrade teachers' ICT competencies, a certificate – **Digital Driving Licence** – has been established since autumn 2000 and can be acquired by teachers upon the successful completion of an on-line test of their ICT skills.

- Austria has plans to establish a **higher eLearning institution for teachers** so that students become familiar during their training with the educational and teaching potential of the new media. Courses to train future teachers as information managers are intended not only to qualify them to teach computer science, but to give them the grounding they need to carry out maintenance of school computer networks and help other teachers to use the new media in their courses. By 2002, a large proportion of teachers should have at least sufficient knowledge to obtain the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL, see the Internet web site at http://www.ecdl.at) which is becoming a necessary condition for employment. At present, some 30-40% of teachers already have basic knowledge of ICT. Measures to get them to undertake their in-service training in this field (use of the Internet and multimedia tools for teaching and learning) are also envisaged, and around 120 000 teachers will be trained by 2002. A CD-ROM called ***E-Fit, Österreichs Lehrer in das Internet*** (E-Fit, making Austrian teachers aware of the Internet era) offers introductory assistance to all those who have not yet worked with the Internet during their courses. The CD-ROM has an automatic installation module with free access for teachers, support for organising the initial hours of instruction with modern media and information about producing educational content for use on line.

- Portugal is concerned to upgrade the skills of all those actively involved in education and is committed to raising the level of qualifications and skills of teachers so that their professional profile matches the demands of a learning society. Several activities have been launched and training centres established for this purpose. In this changing context, considerable importance is attached **to consolidating school autonomy**, with the establishment of revised arrangements for autonomy, administration and management, including the development of school projects which encourage teachers to assume the new role expected of them. The **reorganisation of the school network** and the creation of clusters of schools are part of this approach. This will also enable more effective interaction between teachers at the various levels of education. Initial and continuing training of educational stakeholders (such as teachers, trainers, local organisers, evaluators, counsellors and tutors) is also a priority focus of interest.

The aim of the ***Nónio – 21st Century Programme*** launched by the Portuguese government is to support the development of projects to **bring ICT into education**, as well as the promotion of **teacher training** and international cooperation in ICT, particularly by incorporating the national school network into the network of European schools. Many provisions of the programme are in the form of calls for tender aimed at accrediting and financially supporting *Nónio* skills centres and school projects.

In order to improve the skills of those actively involved in education and training and ensure that their qualifications are appropriate to a learning society, the **Inofor** *(Instituto para Inovação na Formacão)* has set up a learning resource centre. Its aim is to provide an area for consultation and experimentation with new training methods, as well as for the exchange of experience and practical support to professionals in the field of training. The centre is thus, in effect, a distribution channel for the development of individual and/or collective skills. As such, it will be the fulcrum for a network of new generation centres which complement each other and are promoted by specialist training bodies. And as far as formal recognition of the teaching skills of trainers is concerned, the fact that the validity of their certificates is limited (to a five-year period if they are obtained on completion of training) provides additional assurance as to improvement in training quality.

- In Finland, the competence level of teachers in comprehensive and upper secondary schools is quite good, although about 1 500 teachers paid by the hour do not have the appropriate degree for their job. Although the role of the teacher is increasingly becoming that of a student counsellor or a planner of educational environments (so-called 'renewed teachership'), there have been no dramatic changes in it so far. The role is changing, but the process takes time and requires support. The **Opepro project**, which charted the qualitative and quantitative needs of teachers in basic and further education, has been important in terms of the development of teachers' professional skills. This applies in particular to teachers in vocational institutions, who are facing new challenges and expected to contribute actively to boosting cooperation between education and the world of work, by helping to plan and assess on-the-job training periods and market their institution. In the AMK institutes or polytechnics and adult vocational training centres, teaching staff are often recruited from working life and many still work part-time in local business and industry. Their real life experience is held in high esteem and this is supplemented by a teaching diploma completed over three years (Nyyssölä, Hämäläinen, 2001).

The **OPE.FI** project discussed briefly above in section 3.2. represents a further important aspect of action in Finland in the field of teacher training.

Finland is also investing in the **training of adult trainers**. The national programme for the benefit of older workers, which was begun in 1998 and is planned to end in 2002, is a key component in the strategy for lifelong learning. The programme is concerned with the advent of the information society, cultural policy for older workers, making the adult population more aware of educational provision, research on how learning changes as people grow older, and the skills of teachers. The age structure and skills of teaching staff are

therefore one of the priorities for action under this Ministry of Education programme. Two specific projects thus relate to the in-service training requirements of trainers in adult vocational education and the requirements of adult liberal education, respectively (see *Tukeva* and VSOP discussed immediately below). Given the very wide variety of initiatives and possibilities regarding the in-service training of teachers and trainers, the Ministry of Education, together with the National Agency for Education and the departments concerned at provincial level, have attempted to improve the situation by deciding that the supplementary training of trainers should receive annual financial support.

Tukeva is a five-year research and training programme for trainers and other staff involved in adult vocational training. It seeks to improve significantly the skills of around 2000 teachers/trainers and establish improved links with the world of work. It also stimulates cooperation between adult training organisations and the business sector by encouraging trainers and their organisations to be more proactive. The guiding principle is the belief that learning improves work and work improves learning. In *Tukeva*, learners decide the rate at which they will learn. This aspect is reinforced by the importance the programme attaches to virtual environments and the most recent ICT. *Tukeva* enables learners to obtain university and higher vocational education qualifications, particularly in education, business studies and technical subject areas. The aim of the Finnish government is to use the project as a basis for a new network of services for the vocational training of trainers in 2003.

VSOP (Knowledge and Competence in Popular Adult Education) is a comparable programme for teachers/trainers and other staff involved in adult liberal education. It is coordinated by the Finnish Association for Adult Education which launched it for a five-year period in 1998. It is based on the assumption that the development of adult liberal education should be reflected in the growth of a distinctive profession. From this standpoint, courses have been devised not only to provide for the personal development of trainers but also their development as a specific professional community. The Finnish Association for Adult Education has opened the debate on the adoption of a common policy vision for all adult liberal education organisations, and this has given rise to two initiatives to discuss the subject. The specific nature of VSOP resides in the fact that no specific training was previously concerned with adult liberal education. VSOP is thus also operating as what amounts to a mechanism for protecting the identity of such provision. The project seeks to launch studies to initiate newcomers to this kind of education, along with a drive to boost research in the field, which has hitherto not been widespread, and to enhance professional qualifications in the sector.

- In order to prepare teachers in Sweden for their work with new kinds of learners, a **government Commission has put forward proposals for the reform of teaching in higher education**. The proposals relate to the in-service training of university teachers, and ways of adjusting to the educational requirements of new groups of students who enter higher education from different backgrounds.

Furthermore, vocational training in upper secondary schools is provided by subject teachers with advanced economic or technical qualifications, or by teachers who have completed

vocational training and studies in vocational theory. Teachers have also invariably acquired considerable experience in corresponding vocational sectors and been trained at institutes of education. A new programme is being introduced from 1 July 2001 to provide all teachers, from pre-school level to upper secondary level, with a common basis of knowledge and general teacher training. The major task of in-service teacher training in upper secondary schools and *Komvux* ([20]) is to supplement subject qualifications so that they are more consistent with the qualifications required by the new upper secondary school curricula. The government has earmarked EUR 185 millions (SEK 1.7 billion) for the period 1999-2002, to develop teachers' IT knowledge and skills. The training will benefit some 70 000 teachers. The government has also provided EUR 23 millions (SEK 200 million) to upgrade teachers' skills and knowledge in special education for children with learning disabilities.

- In the United Kingdom, the DfEE has recently published **a strategy document for the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers**. The strategy includes initiatives such as sabbaticals, increased CPD for teachers in the second and third years of teaching, research scholarships, professional bursaries and opportunities for international professional development. A code of practice for CPD providers has also been published recently. In Wales, the National Assembly is considering ways to enhance the professional development of teachers and a consultation has been launched on an **Accelerated Development Scheme for Teachers in Wales**.

  The **national curricula for teacher training** in England and Wales **specify the essential core of knowledge, understanding and skills** which all trainees intending to teach in primary and secondary schools must be taught and be able to use in relation to the core subjects and the use of ICT in subject teaching. Institutions are expected to include other aspects of the subject not specified in the curricula. Additional requirements are being introduced for all trainee teachers. Computerised tests in numeracy and literacy were introduced in February 2001 for all those seeking to qualify as teachers between 1 May 2001 and 30 April 2002. Tests in ICT skills are being introduced from September 2001. In England, all trainees seeking to obtain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) from 1 May 2002 will be required to pass these skills tests. The tests will cover the core skills teachers need to fulfil their wider professional role in schools, rather than the subject knowledge required for teaching. They must be taken by all new entrants into the teaching profession regardless of the training route followed. Similar tests may be introduced in Wales at a later date subject to the views of the National Assembly for Wales.

  There are currently no statutory requirements for the initial training of teachers in the further education sector in England. However, from September 2001, all new full-time further education teachers in England will be required to obtain a university **Certificate in Educa-**

([20]) *Komvux* is municipal adult education consisting of basic adult education, upper secondary level adult education and supplementary education.

tion, while part-time teachers will be required to obtain a **City & Guilds Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate**.

In Northern Ireland, all full-time lecturers are required to undertake **appropriate ICT qualifications at level 2** by September 2002.

In the United Kingdom, **New Opportunities Fund Training** aims to train teachers and librarians to use ICT effectively in meeting their teaching objectives and to reach the level of expertise in ICT now required by newly qualified teachers (who since 1999, in England and Wales, have had to achieve mandatory standards of competence in ICT).

There are various initiatives in England and Wales to **equip and train teachers with ICT**, including *Computers for Teachers, Laptops for Headteachers* and a scheme within the *Fast-track Programme* for the accelerated development and promotion of excellent new teachers. The aim is to raise teachers' confidence and competence in ICT by offering them personal access to a computer. *Laptops for Headteachers* targeted newly appointed headteachers. All teachers selected for the *Fast-track Programme* are eligible to receive a free laptop computer.

In Northern Ireland, the **Strategic Investment Fund** is financing a Lecturers in Industry programme to enable teaching to become more closely aligned with current industrial needs.

Several initiatives also focus on supporting organisations and their staff who deliver basic skills programmes to adults in England:

- the **FEFC Basic Skills Quality Initiative** which aims to improve the strategic and operational management of basic skills provision. The first two stages of the initiative involved developing good practice materials and training facilitators to help providers make most effective use of these materials.

- The government has also commissioned the BSA to deliver a programme of **Intensive Curriculum Training** to support the introduction of the new national adult literacy and numeracy standards and curriculum. The first phase, between January and March 2001, is providing training for around 500 trainers who, in the second phase, will be part of a pool of trainers in each region, delivering the intensive training locally. This second phase, starting in February 2002, will offer a three-day intensive training programme, based around the new curriculum, to all literacy and numeracy teachers in post-16 education who work for six or more hours a week.

- **The Basic Skills Brokerage Scheme** is aimed at engaging employers through a network of trained brokers and accredited providers of workplace basic skills. The programme is providing staff training and development for brokers and workplace providers in west London and north-east England. This is part of a range of workplace development projects managed by the BSA.

- To support the teaching of basic skills in the workplace, the government is funding the delivery of 30 **Breaking Down Barriers** Certificate courses throughout England during 2001/02. They are being coordinated by the Workplace Basic Skills Network and delivered in partnership with local Learning and Skills Councils and regional development agencies.

- For students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the government has commissioned a programme of work from a consortium led by the Learning and Skills Development Agency and the National Organisation for Adult Learning (NIACE). One of the five strands will be staff development for literacy and numeracy teachers working with people who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

KEY MESSAGE 4: VALUING LEARNING

European Commission *Memorandum* on lifelong learning

Significantly improve the ways in which learning participation and outcomes are understood and appreciated, particularly non-formal and informal learning.

Ensuring that learning is visibly and appropriately recognised is an integral element of the quality of education and training services. For an integrated Europe, both an open labour market and citizens' rights to free movement to live, study, train and work in all Member States demand that knowledge, skills and qualifications are both more readily understandable and more practically 'portable' within the Union.

Explicit recognition is an effective means to motivate 'non-traditional learners' as well as those who have not been active in the labour force. It is essential to develop high quality systems for the Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL), to evaluate and recognise individuals' existing knowledge, skills and experience gained over long periods and in diverse contexts, including in non-formal and informal settings, and to promote their application in a wide variety of contexts.

Designing reliable systems requires greater involvement of those who ultimately validate credentials in practice and who are familiar with the ways in which individuals and enterprises use credentials in everyday life. The Social Partners and relevant NGOs are therefore no less important than are official authorities and professional educators.

Summary

The Memorandum defines lifelong learning as 'all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences'. It goes on to underline the lifewide dimension of learning which means that it can take place anywhere, at any time. This combination implies that developing lifelong learning means not simply reforming or changing formal education and training as we know them, but much more: including and linking learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings. This involves creating bridges and articulation between various learning pathways, enabling more movement between work and school and vice versa, and most importantly, valuing and making visible in terms of documentation or qualifications the results of learning taking place in non-formal settings.

It is this latter aspect that distinguishes lifelong learning in the 21st century from the vision put forward in the 1970s. It also emphasises the uniqueness of each individual's learning route and the myriad of actors and providers that can be involved in the learning continuum throughout one's life. Elements of transparency and standardisation must be introduced to make it possible to assess and validate or put a value on the outcomes of such learning, so that both the individual and prospective employers can comprehend and profit from it.

All systems evolving, with the exception of some experiments in Belgium and France, are based on mapping outcomes of non-formal learning onto the formal system as a step towards a formal qualification. Is this always what is necessary? Not all employees, for example, intend completing a formal qualification, but they might like to have their competence accredited for the purpose of promotion, job change, or pay increase. Developments are still in their infancy and these are thorny issues to grasp. This is something in which the social partners have a leading role to play. In the Netherlands, the social partners are responsible for lifelong learning in the workplace and they have concluded an agreement with the government, the Employability Agenda (Doets, et al, 2001), one of the ten action points of which is 'further introduction and development of accreditation of prior learning'. Involvement so far on the part of the public authorities, social partners, sectoral branches, NGOs and other associations has been conducted on this type of formal level. Cooperation is on a practical level, or it is also sometimes oriented towards future developments.

Valuing learning is not only related to improving employment and career prospects, although this is important, and there is a growing demand for credentials in all walks of life. This creates a dilemma for liberal adult education in the form of special interest or hobby-related activities. Such courses do not usually lead to a qualification, and while they are a tremendous social asset, they now risk competing and losing out to learning programmes which offer certification.

If the Transparency Forum now takes non-formal learning on board, it could provide a platform a) for improving the recognition of knowledge, qualifications and skills to facilitate mobility and lifelong learning, and b) for Member States to exchange systematic information on the use and acceptability of innovative forms of assessment and recognition. The national reference points being established to implement the recommendations of the Forum must work very closely with guidance and information services at national, regional and local level.

Actions at European level

Initiatives at European level have clearly been important in pushing the issue of recognition of non-formal learning forward in the minds of the public and politicians. The White Paper on Teaching and Learning (1995) helped to define the issue in a clear way and thus supported the processes at national and sector levels. The resulting programmes (mainly Leonardo da Vinci and Adapt) have initiated and financed unparalleled experimental activity. While not interfering directly in efforts to develop national systems, the EU has clearly increased interest in the issue and also contributed in a practical sense by supporting methodological and institutional experimentation. This does not mean that the particular strategy of the white paper, focusing on European standards and a **European personal skills card** (PSC), has been implemented. One important reason for this is the mixing of objectives in the original conception of the task. On the one hand, the PSC was presented as a summative approach; introducing new

and more flexible proof of qualifications and competences. On the other hand, the need for new assessment methodologies was promoted on the basis of the need to identify and utilise a broader basis of competences: what we may term a formative objective basically addressing the support of learning processes.

The **Leonardo and Socrates** programmes have financed a number of projects to develop automated assessment in the three skill areas defined by the White Paper:

- basic skills;
- technical and vocational skills;
- key skills.

Commissioned by the Commission in 1998, *Guildford Educational Services* concluded after studying initiatives in this area that it is difficult to develop computer-aided tests which are both valid and reliable in a number of countries because it is difficult to find a common core of contents that is valid in all these countries.

The **European Computer Driving Licence** (ECDL) is however a good example of an approach specific to a task and/or a technology. The success of this experiment, based on clear definitions of the field to be assessed and on an efficient institutional structure, provides food for thought for future strategies. This type of test covers fields that can be readily measured in an almost objective way (true/false) but masks key competences such as those linked to communication, cooperation and problem-solving (see also Chapter dedicated to the *Memorandum* Key Message 1).

ECTS – the European Credit Transfer System – guarantees academic recognition of studies abroad. It creates curriculum transparency by providing detailed information on the curricula and their relevance towards a degree and also helps academics make academic recognition decisions thanks to prior agreement on the content of study programmes abroad between students and their home and host institutions. As well as in the Member States, the system has been widely adopted in the candidate countries.

The European Commission (DG EAC) established a steering group to study the possible development of the European Credit Transfer System into a **European Credit System** allowing for accumulation and transfer within the lifelong learning perspective, thus including credit accumulation in education, vocational training, professional development and promoting lifelong learning. The **Bologna Declaration** specifically mentions the establishment of 'a system of credits – such as in the ECTS system'. It suggests 'Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, providing they are recognised by receiving Universities concerned.' This matter will be taken up in the Joint Action Programme for Socrates, Leonardo and Youth.

The **European Forum in the field of Transparency of Vocational Qualifications** was set up in November 1998 as a joint venture between Cedefop and the European Commission. Since

then it has agreed a number of important recommendations which are being acted on by the Member States.

The **certificate supplement** aims to propose a standardised format to present skills and competences acquired by holders of a certificate and to establish a system to issue, together with each official national certificate, *a certificate supplement in the official national language*, which could be translated on a voluntary basis in one or more other EU languages. The certificate supplement will be based on a common European format. It is one of several tools to increase transparency of vocational qualifications supporting job seekers in Europe. It should help vocational certificates to be more easily understood by employers in countries other than the issuing one. The supplement format has been translated into eleven languages.

The Forum also recommends that the Member States of EU/EEA take the initiative to designate **national reference points** with the following qualities and capacities:

- have an overview of and capability to use national information resources on structure and content of the national education and training system(s) within VET;
- actively cooperate with European institutions and networks for information, both on a bilateral and multilateral basis;
- assist individuals, institutions, employers and reference points in other countries with information supporting transnational mobility and transparency of vocational qualification;
- support the implementation of the Forum's proposals at national level, such as the development of certificate supplements (while not necessarily being the body producing and issuing the supplement).

Ten Member States have so far taken practical steps towards establishing reference points. The Forum is continuing its work by setting up a working group to prepare the ground for including transparency of non-formal learning in its brief.

Following the Council decision on the promotion of European pathways for work-linked training, including apprenticeship (1999/51/EC, OJ L 17 of 22.1.1999), adopted on 21 December 1998, the **Europass Training** was implemented on 1st January 2000. It has a two-fold purpose to define the content and quality principles underpinning the European pathways, i.e. training periods spent abroad, and to boost their transparency and visibility. This document provides the personal details of the trainee, information on the training initiative concerned (which includes the European pathway) and details of training periods abroad (host partner, mentor, etc.). Only the National Contact Points are entitled to distribute the 'Europass Training' to organisations in their country that send trainees abroad in the framework of European pathways. National Contact Points exist in the 15 Member States and three countries of the European Economic Area. The Europa website gives details of these and links to some of their home pages.

As a follow-up to the Lisbon Council, which called for the development of a 'common **European CV**', the Commission has set up an expert group within the framework of the Transparency Forum to discuss this question which is closely linked to the more general policy issues regarding transparency of qualifications and mobility.

The common curriculum vitae format should assist individuals in communicating their qualifications, competences and experiences to potential employers at home or abroad, in the most efficient way. By emphasising the content and profile of the competences held by individuals, it should support fair treatment. A CV format will be used in two main forms. Firstly, in the traditional form as an annex to a job application (paper or electronic). Secondly, as is becoming more and more common, as an input to a 'job-seeker database.' This latter form has already been introduced in a number of Member States by both public employment services and private 'job-brokers' (see Chapter dedicated to the *Memorandum* Key Message 5, *Orientagiovani*). A European version is currently being considered by the European Commission and *Eures* (European Employment Services).

4.1 Developing systems for recognising and valuing non-formal and informal learning

Summary

Over the last ten years, most European countries have started to introduce methods and institutions to assess and recognise learning acquired outside formal education and training systems. One can see a gradual shift from the stage of pure experimentation to early implementation. An examination of these measures highlights the lack of a common European approach throughout the Member States. However, reforms have been shaped by the same challenges and dynamics.

The European situation is presented through examples of five country clusters. The text is based largely on extracts from Bjørnåvold (2000), Making learning visible: identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning in Europe.

Although countries within each cluster may differ somewhat in their methodological and institutional approaches and choices, geographical nearness as well as institutional closeness seem to motivate mutual learning and, to a certain degree, common solutions.

▶ Germany and Austria: **the dual system approach**

The German and Austrian approaches to the question of identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning are very similar. It is interesting to note that the two countries where work-based learning has been most systematically integrated into education and training (through the dual system) have so far been very reluctant to embrace this new trend. On the one hand, this reflects success; the dual system is generally viewed as successful both in terms of pedagogy (the combination of formal and experiential learning) and capacity (high proportions of the age groups covered). On the other hand, and reflecting the strong emphasis on initial training, the existing system seems only partly able to extend its functions to continuing vocational training and to the more diverse training requirements of adults. But, in spite of this, we can

observe a substantial amount of project-based experimentation and the attention towards these questions is increasing. The discussion on recognition of non-formal learning in Germany and Austria is closely linked to the discussion on flexibility of education and training.

▶ Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal: **the Mediterranean approach**

The general attitude to the introduction of methodologies and systems for non-formal learning in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal is positive. Both in the public and private realms, the usefulness of such practices is clearly expressed. The huge reservoir of non-formal learning which creates the basis for important parts of the economies in these countries needs to be made visible. It is not only a question of making it easier to utilise existing competences, but also a question of how to improve the quality of these. Methodologies for the assessment and recognition of non-formal learning can be viewed as tools for quality improvement, encompassing not only single workers and enterprises but whole sections of the economy. These countries also illustrate that the step from intention to implementation is a long one. Legal and political moves have been made through educational reforms of varying scope but the actual introduction of assessment and recognition practices has not progressed very far. The coming years will show whether the positive intentions almost unanimously expressed in the four countries will be translated into practices which actually affect and serve individuals and enterprises.

In Italy, the recognition of non-formal learning has been introduced in the school system in the context of the new certification awarded to pupils on completion of compulsory and upper secondary education.

▶ Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark: **the Nordic approach**

It is not possible to speak of a 'Nordic model' at least not in any strict sense. Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden have chosen different approaches and are working according to somewhat different schedules. These differences do not change the fact that all four countries have taken practical steps through legislation and institutional initiatives, towards strengthening the link between formal education and training and learning taking place outside schools. Despite the fact that some elements of this strategy have existed for some time, the most important initiatives have taken place in recent years, mostly since 1994/95. The mutual learning between these countries is strong and has become even stronger over the past two to three years. The influence of Finnish and Norwegian approaches on recent Swedish documents illustrates this effect. Finland and Norway are clearly opening up for the institutional integration of non-formal learning as part of a general lifelong learning strategy. The plans presented in Sweden indicate that this country is moving in the same direction, and in both Sweden and Denmark the issue of non-formal learning will become more focused in the years ahead.

Under the basic (second chance) adult education system in Denmark, previous education and professional experience may be supplemented by attendance at further courses to secure the validation of skills to a certain level. The aim of the adult education programme is the same as that of the corresponding programme for the education and initial training of young people.

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Adult learners take the final exam just like young people still at school, but their basic course is more flexibly structured, with more real-life content linked to the practical experience and qualifications acquired by adults in various contexts. The idea is to make the most of this capital. Before embarking on a basic adult education course, candidates must undergo an assessment of their skills by the school, which relates to their past achievements and professional experience. The school uses the assessment to prepare a personalised education and training package that those concerned follow in order to obtain full recognition of their skills. These arrangements are for adults aged at least 25 with a minimum of two years of professional experience.

Since development of the *Kunskapslyftet* initiative (see Chapter dedicated to the *Memorandum* Key Message 1), the **validation of the skills and knowledge acquired inside or outside the formal system of education** has been a priority in Sweden. Several municipalities have used different methods to evaluate and recognise the experience and knowledge acquired by adults in educational, vocational or other contexts. In 1998, a special government-appointed commissioner proposed a series of principles to guide the recognition of professional skills acquired in upper secondary education abroad – principles which would also be applicable to other levels of education and training. In 1999, a Commission was appointed to carry out work in three main areas:

- its first task was to set up and evaluate three pilot projects for the purpose of developing models and methods for validating vocational skills acquired abroad in upper secondary education, as well as other skills required by the labour market in some professions;
- it then had to propose operational arrangements and plan for the extension of the pilot project;
- finally, the Commission had to undertake a study of needs with regard to a national system for validating adult skills and knowledge.

Meanwhile, a certain number of local authorities continued independently to validate skills. The knowledge and experience that the pilot project was meant to contribute was, to a large extent, acquired as a result of these municipal initiatives. As the basic data had changed during the work of the Commission, its responsibilities were reviewed in December 2000. Its activities are now focused on the production of an inventory and a description and analysis of local authority practice in the field of validation. There is still commitment to the agreement reached with three municipalities on the pilot projects concerned with the validation of professional skills acquired abroad. A final report is due in October 2001.

▶ United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands: **the NVQ approach**

In the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands we can observe strong acceptance of an output-oriented, performance-based model of education and training. General acceptance of learning outside formal education and training institutions as a valid and important pathway to competences is a basic feature in these countries. What is questioned, however, is how such a system should be realised. The UK and Dutch experiences illustrate some of the institutional, methodological and practical problems associated with establishing a system able to integrate non-formal learning within its framework. The challenge of developing an acceptable qualification stan-

dard seems to represent the first and perhaps most serious obstacle. As long as assessments are supposed to be criterion-referenced, the quality of the standard is crucial. The UK experiences identify some of these difficulties balancing between too general and too specific descriptions and definitions of competences. The second important challenge illustrated in the UK and Dutch cases, but not reflected in our material on the Irish experience, is related to the classical assessment challenges of reliability and validity. In our material the problems have been clearly demonstrated but the answers, if they exist, are not so clearly defined. All three countries base their vocational education and training on modularised systems, a factor which seems to support the rapid and large-scale introduction of methodologies and institutions in the field.

▶ France and Belgium: **'opening up' diplomas and certificates**

In several respects, France can be characterised as one of the most advanced European countries in the area of identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning. Belgium has been less active, but a number of initiatives have been taken during recent years, partly influenced by the French experiences. The first French initiatives were taken as early as 1985 when the system of the *bilan de competence* (skills record) was introduced. The aim of the *bilan* is to support the employer/employee in identifying and assessing professional competences; both to support career development and enterprise-internal utilisation of competences.

The second important French initiative was the 'opening up' of the national vocational education and training system for competences acquired outside formal institutions. Since 1992, vocational certificates *(Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle)* can be achieved (to various degrees) on the basis of assessments of non-formal and prior learning. From this standpoint, the 20 July Law 1992 on this kind of validation has introduced an all-important innovation in the award of technological and vocational diplomas and similar qualifications. All those who have followed a form of professional activity corresponding to such a qualification may obtain exemptions from the qualifying examinations on the grounds of experience. The activity concerned may have been pursued in more than one capacity, such as that of salaried employee, craftsman, self-employed person, etc. An individual response to adults involved in active life who wish to obtain formal qualifications, the validation of professional expertise is an inevitable aspect of the entire lifelong education issue. By introducing this entitlement, the Ministry of Education is effectively acknowledging that working in itself leads to skills and knowledge on a par with conventional education and training. An official value is accordingly attached to the gains accruing from professional experience by a body external to firms.

A further development in the field of validation and certification of competences acquired through work experience and outside formal education and training is expected when the draft law on social modernisation, and especially its articles on the recognition of lifelong experience and on diplomas and certificates accrediting vocational skills and knowledge, is adopted. On 12 January 2001, the National Assembly adopted the vocational training section of the draft law at the first reading. The aim is that the part concerned with 'validating the achievements of experience' (VAE) should take effect from September 2001 onwards. Measures in the part dealing with apprenticeship would come into force in 2002. Several amendments include

changes relating to joint action at regional level (establishment of regional coordination committees), but also to the training actually on offer (the procedure for declaring the existence of a given form of training is spelt out) and distance training. An observatory to monitor available training provision is to be set up, and a proposal was outlined in the meeting of the National Assembly Social Affairs Committee.

A third important initiative was taken by the French Chambers of Commerce and Industry where the aim was to set up procedures and standards for assessment independent of the formal education and training system. Using the European norm EN45013 on procedures for certifying personnel as a point of departure, important experiences have been gained. Parallel activities based on EN45013 are going on in Belgium.

4.2 Bridging and flexibility within existing systems

Summary

As observed under Key Message 1 (see above), some countries are developing national frameworks which allow seamless movement from one type of education or training to another. Other countries are attempting to improve progression within their existing systems by opening up possibilities to move to and from vocational and general/academic education, from initial to continuing training, transition from school to work and later from work to studies or training and back, as required. A number of mechanisms are used: institutions and courses offering dual qualifications which open the way to both higher education and the labour market; access and bridging courses; increased modularization, credit transfer, etc.

- In its efforts to implement lifelong learning, Italy adopted **regulations** in March 2000 **concerned with the evaluation and certification of *Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore*** (IFTS, or higher technical education and training) which has been devised as a bridge between basic education, training and the world of work. At the same time, a credit system has been introduced to encourage the free movement of learners within the training system. This innovation, the development of which is now nearing completion, is applicable to two levels, namely the university system and IFTS. Agreements to ensure the two-way recognition of credits across both systems are currently being formulated.

  Experiments are also being conducted in upper secondary education, particularly as regards transition towards the vocational training system.

  It is in adult education, however, that experimentation is set to go further. Its training model is characterised by provision of many different open and flexible training pathways with a distinctive modular structure. Irrespective of the sector in which it is offered (associations, schools or other bodies), each module may be recognised as a training credit by schools

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or vocational training institutions for the purpose of further study (in the school and vocational system). Skills acquired outside specialised education and vocational training agencies and, in particular, at agencies offering training courses included in regionally and locally prepared schemes, may also be recognised.

- In Sweden, for those who have not achieved the pass grade of 90% in the core subjects at upper secondary school, necessary to gain access to university, the 25:4 rule offers them an alternative. Adults over 24 years old during the academic year and who have been in employment at least half time for four years are eligible to apply.

- The qualifications and curriculum authorities in the United Kingdom are in the process of implementing the framework of national awards recommended by the Dearing review (Dearing, 1996). The new framework embraces general academic and vocational qualifications at various levels:

  - Entry Level (National Curriculum levels 3, 2 and 1;
  - Foundation Level 1 (GCSE grades D–G, GNVQ foundation level and NVQ level 1);
  - Intermediate Level 2 (GCSE grades A*–C, GNVQ intermediate level and NVQ level 2);
  - Advanced-level 3 (GCE A-level and GCE AS qualification, GNVQ Advanced-level and NVQ level 3);
  - Higher level 4 (sub-first degree level) and NVQ level 4; and
  - Higher level 5 (equivalent to first degree level) and NVQ level 5.

  Within the school system, GCSEs and their equivalent qualifications are normally taken at age 16, and GCE A levels and their equivalents are normally taken at age 18.

  Awarding bodies are required to submit their qualifications for accreditation by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England, the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) and the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). The initial round of accreditation is likely to be completed in 2001/2002.

  The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (HE) is developing a new framework for higher education (QAA, 2000). From 2006 all higher education qualifications will be awarded in accordance with the principles of the framework.

  The purpose of the framework is to:
  - position all HE qualifications relative to one another and to other kinds of qualifications within the UK and overseas;
  - underpin the standards of qualifications;
  - ensure accuracy and consistency in titles;
  - clarify routes for progression and lifelong learning;

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- establish a common currency for credit accumulation and transfer; and
- provide clear and accessible public information.

Scotland is working to enhance the **transparency and clarity of its qualifications framework**. In this respect, the **Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)** is a key element of Scottish policy for lifelong learning. The framework will make the Scottish qualifications system, especially the progression routes between qualifications, easier to understand for learners, employees, employers and providers. The relationship between qualifications will be presented in terms of levels and credit ratings. The framework will help transfer credits from one qualification to another (where relevant). As a result of this framework, the system of qualifications and, in particular, the various avenues leading to qualifications will be easier for learners, employers and training providers to understand. The framework will situate each qualification with respect to common reference markers and clarify precisely how it relates to other qualifications. This will help learners when credits have to be transferred from qualifications they already possess to others which they wish to obtain. The development of SCQF is being monitored by a **Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)** including representatives of key education and training providers.

In addition, the ***Progress File*** has now replaced the **National Record of Achievement (NRA)** which was used for seven years. The *Progress File* will enable learners to summarise simply their educational and professional achievements and map out their own plan for the future. It emphasises increased 'individual ownership' and the personal responsibility of individuals for development throughout life. It has been designed with the needs of different groups of learners in mind, and contains four main sections corresponding to the different stages of education and training, namely *Getting Started* (for those aged 12-14), *Moving On* (for those aged 15-16), *Widening Horizons* (for young people over 16 in further education) and *Broadening Horizons* (for adults). The *Progress File* has also been tested for primary education.

▶ Action relating to skills validation in Norway has helped to **make the conditions governing admission to higher education more flexible**. For the last three years, anyone who satisfies the formal conditions may enter university, in the field of the liberal arts and the sciences, although there is still a *numerus clausus* for long courses in certain professional sectors such as medicine. Applicants aged over 23 who have at least five years of professional experience, or who combine such experience with previous education and training in a way which is equivalent overall, may now enter higher education with certain qualifications from upper secondary education. Admission is dependent on a minimum set of conditions which have to be satisfied in six subjects, namely the national language (Norwegian), English, history, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences. In autumn 2000, the parliament adopted an amendment concerning the universities and colleges which gave all those aged 25 or over the right to be assessed on the basis of their non-formal learning achievements, with a view to their entering higher education to pursue a specific course of study. Adults are also entitled to apply to sit upper secondary and higher education examinations as external students, with support from the Public Loans Fund for Education. This right to validate and com-

pile a written record of non-formal learning which is the result of professional experience, active involvement in civil society or voluntary work will make for easier access to higher education at a level consistent with individual skills, and cut the time taken up by the procedures leading to final qualifying examinations. The scheme to recognise and record non-formal learning at the level of upper secondary education got under way in 1999 and will last for three years. No less than 25 different projects are in hand and around 1000 adults have been assessed. The Norwegian Institute for Adult Education (VOX) is responsible for managing this project, in which the social partners, the local authorities and public and private-sector educational service providers are also taking part.

4.3 Involving a larger public and its implications for all parties concerned

Summary

Assessment systems are being given a new direction where increasing stress is placed on what people are able to do (outputs) rather than on the place or method of learning (inputs). This change is to some extent due to the growing importance of lifelong learning, making it necessary to take account of alternative methods of acquiring skills and to develop a permanent structure providing a link between the various stages of learning throughout life. We have seen some effects under Key Message 3, e.g. more workplace learning in formal VET, as well as accreditation of prior learning. Among other things, this approach makes it necessary for individuals' skills to be transparent.

The labour market selects those who possess the most appropriate skills. It is now felt that formal education and training systems cannot identify all the skills that an individual acquires throughout life by formal, non-formal and informal learning. During the past few years, most Member States of the EU have emphasised the crucial role of learning that takes place outside of and in addition to, formal education and training. This emphasis has led to an increasing number of political and practical initiatives stimulating action by various actors.

- In the Netherlands, the government is involved in a **special partnership** with **vocational branches** and **sectors. EVC** is a set of procedures for evaluating knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal or informal contexts, as well as recognising them in the form of official certificates or diplomas. The Dutch government has sought to upgrade this system by establishing an 'EVC knowledge centre'. Launched in January 2001 for a four-year period (2001-2005), the centre will be responsible for developing and promoting EVC policy in **vocational branches** and **sectors** through the provision of information and the development of EVC procedures. The centre itself does not award qualifications, but collects, processes and distributes information on the system concerned. It also attempts to interest those active on the labour market, on behalf of the above-mentioned branches and sectors, in establishing their own EVC procedure. In this respect it acts, so to speak, as a catalyst.

- All those actively involved in adult training in Portugal cooperate within the **National Agency for Adult Education and Training (ANEFA)** set up in September 1999. Acting simultaneously in the areas of demand and supply, the ANEFA is responsible for persuading the adult population of the need to embark on continuing education and training, making all available provision more accessible and attractive and, to this end, mobilising institutions within existing formal systems of education and training, as well as many other bodies (such as municipalities, associations and firms). The ANEFA will also contribute to the development of an autonomous sub-system of adult education and training, by identifying and recognising new kinds of provision for adults and formally validating previously acquired knowledge and skills. While not itself a training organisation, ANEFA is financing and supporting bodies and activities for adult education and training, especially where they combine continuing education with forms of training geared to the labour market. In order to be accessible to the greatest possible number and to very mixed kinds of target group, special emphasis is being devoted to the gradual development of a system based on distance education methods and personalised forms of support. In addition, the first four centres for validating and recognising skills informally acquired throughout life were accredited in December 2000, and 28 accredited centres are planned for operation by December 2001.

- In Finland in recent years, investments have also been made in developing **co-operation between educational institutions**. Youth-level education pilot projects have brought vocational education and general upper secondary schools remarkably closer together and the obligation on educational institutions to co-operate (from 1999) is a result of such pilot projects. Co-operation between general upper secondary schools and universities has also increased, but co-operation between comprehensive schools and vocational education continues to be inadequate.

- In the United Kingdom, the Government recognizes the importance of involving the wider community in the education decision-making process. This is effected by various means within the different phases of education. The principal means is through **the representation of different groups on the governing bodies of institutions**. In addition, various groups, such as teacher unions, parent associations and representatives of commerce and industry, are also regularly invited by the Government to participate in consultation procedures preceding reforms.

  In England and Wales, the election, by the local community, of councillors to the local authority and subsequent representation on the authority's education committee also provide an element of local accountability. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 made it a statutory requirement to have parent representation on local authority committees dealing with education matters and, since the passing of the Local Government Act 2000, parents have been able to vote in committee on all education matters. A network for parent governor representatives has also recently been launched.

In Northern Ireland, Education and Library Boards include members who are appointed by the district councils from amongst their elected councillors. The remaining members are appointed by the Minister for Education from persons nominated by local interest groups, such as the churches, teaching staff, local businesses, trade unions, parents and community groups.

In the UK, the National Training Organisations (NTOs) network was launched in May 1998, following rationalisation and reorganisation of the structures in place. There are currently 75 officially recognised NTOs. Each represents an individual industry or organisation. NTOs are employer-led bodies whose role is to assess the current and future training needs of the sectors they represent and to ensure that these needs are met. They are responsible for defining competences and developing skills within their own industrial or commercial sector. NTOs work closely with employers, encouraging them to participate in the development and uptake of competence-based occupational standards, and also have a general role in promoting education and training qualifications among employers. Some National Training Organisations act as awarding bodies for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and most work closely with Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). The NTO National Council, an independent national body, represents the constituent members of the NTO network.

- In Norway, the ***Forum for Kompetanseutviklingt*** (The Competence Reform: Forum for Competence Building) consists of public authority representatives (from around ten ministries), the social partners and the main education and training providers. The operational part of the Forum involves a contact group with representatives from the same entities who meet once a month. *Kompetanseutviklingsprogrammet* (programme for competence building) is a three-year initiative which began in January 2000 and whose aim is to create a market for continuing education and training. It seeks to develop learning contracts and partnerships between firms and education and training service providers. Projects support firms, local authorities, business networks, professional sectors and trading partners, etc. Work on the programme is developing in close cooperation with the social partners. The Norwegian Institute for Adult education is responsible for managing the scheme and, in 2000, 177 projects were awarded total funding of EUR 5 856 000 ([21]) (NOK 48 million).

Bjørnåvold (2000) draws a number of conclusions on creating structures for the identification, assessment and recognition of competences, however they are acquired, which are summarised below:

Establishing a system for learning throughout life requires a stronger focus on the link between different forms of learning in different learning domains at different stages of life. While the formal system is still very much focused on initial education and training, a lifelong learning

([21]) GBP-EUR exchange rate based on the spot figure for 12/03/2001 from the European Central Bank.

system has to face the challenge of linking a variety of formal and non-formal learning areas together. This is necessary to meet the individual's need for continuous and varied renewal of knowledge and the enterprise's need for a broad array of knowledge and competences – a sort of knowledge reservoir to face the unexpected. The question of identification, assessment and recognition of competences is also crucial. Competences have to be made visible if they are to be fully integrated into such a broader strategy for knowledge reproduction and renewal.

Identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning has to be based on simple and inexpensive methodologies and a clear notion of how institutional and political responsibilities are to be shared. But first and foremost, these methodologies have to be able to deliver what they promise, with the quality of 'measurement' being a crucial aspect.

The purpose of the assessments, in the non-formal as well as in the formal domain, is decisive for the methodological choices to be made and for the ultimate success of the exercise. Successful development of methodologies and systems implies that these functions are clearly understood and combined and/or separated in a constructive and realistic way.

The diversity of learning processes and contexts makes it difficult to achieve the same kind of reliability as in standardised (for example, multiple choice) tests. The question is how (and which specific kind of) reliability should be sought in this new domain. *Reliability should be sought by seeking optimal transparency of the assessment process (standards, procedures, etc.). Reliability could also be supported through implementation of systematic and transparent quality assurance practices at all levels and in all functions.*

The highly contextual and (partly) tacit character of non-formal learning complicates the quest for validity. There is an acute danger of measuring something other than what is intended. The main thing is to avoid a distorted picture of the candidate and the domain and to strive for authenticity. *Methodologies have to reflect the complexity of the task at hand; methodologies must be able to capture what is individually and contextually specific.*

The question of **reference points** ('standards') is a major issue for assessment of formal as well as non-formal learning. While norm-referencing (using the performance of a group/population) has not been seriously discussed in the context of assessing non-formal learning (due to the diversity of competences involved), the issue of criterion or domain-referencing lies at the heart of the matter. *The definition of boundaries of competence-domains (their size and content) and the ways in which competences can be expressed within this domain is of critical importance.* The wider the area, the greater the challenge in designing authentic assessment approaches. This reverts, in many ways, to the question of functions to be fulfilled; do we want to improve learning processes or do we want to produce proof (papers of value)? Both purposes are highly legitimate and useful. The setting up of reference points will, however, differ considerably according to the purposes selected. As far as institutional and political implementation is concerned, this could be supported along two main strategies: one focusing on *'institutional design'* and the other on *'mutual learning'*.

Institutional design: some basic criteria must be fulfilled if proof of non-formal learning is to be accepted along with proof of formal education and training. First of all, participants must be heard when setting up and operating systems of this kind. Since systems for recognition of non-formal learning will have a direct effect upon the setting of wages as well as on the distribution of jobs and positions in the labour market, this matter clearly incorporates the balancing of interests. Although not emphasised very much until now, the question of whom to involve and whom to listen will be of decisive importance in the coming period. Secondly, relevant information must be fed into the process. On the question of representation, the definition and articulation of standards and reference points (in particular) require sufficient and balanced information. Thirdly, the transparency of the structures and procedures are very important. It is possible to establish structures where the division of roles (setting of standards, assessment, appeal, quality control) is clearly defined and presented. Transparency of procedures is 'a must' if acceptance and legitimacy are to be achieved. The attention of both researchers and policy-makers must be drawn to all these issues in the near future.

Mutual learning should be sought and supported between projects, institutions and countries. A substantial amount of learning is already taking place at various levels. The potential for mutual learning is much greater than the actual and factual achievements thus far. Establishing such learning mechanisms must reflect the various purposes and functions to be fulfilled. Finally, it is very necessary to increase co-ordination and to support activities (at European and national levels) in order to capitalise on the experiences gained through numerous existing projects, programmes and institutional reforms.

KEY MESSAGE 5: RETHINKING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

European Commission *Memorandum* on lifelong learning

Ensure that everyone can easily access good quality information and advice about learning opportunities throughout Europe and throughout their lives is the central concern of this key message.

Today, we may all need information and advice on 'what to do next' at several times in our lives, and perhaps quite unpredictably. This is an integral part of planning and carrying through a life project as an ongoing process, in which paid work is but one component, however important that might be. Living and working in the knowledge society calls for active citizens who are self-motivated to pursue their own personal and professional development.

The practitioner's task is to accompany individuals on their unique journey through life, by releasing motivation, providing relevant information and facilitating decision-making. The future role of guidance and counselling professionals could be described as 'brokerage'. The 'guidance broker' is able to call on and tailor a wide range of information in order to help decide on the best course of action for the future. ICT/Internet-based sources of information and diagnostic tools open up new horizons for improving the range and the quality of guidance and counselling services.

Guidance and counselling services must move towards more 'holistic' styles of provision, able to address a range of needs and demands and a variety of publics.

Summary

Guidance centres cannot be confined to any one institutional setting, such as schools or employment offices. They have to become open local services available to citizens, as and when they are needed. A review of work on guidance (Chiousse/Werquin, 1999) found that because education and training no longer focus on young people, the need for guidance and counselling recurs throughout life. Lifelong learning has to be accompanied by lifelong guidance. It recommended the redesign and reorganisation of counselling and guidance services and adequate training for counsellors, including real expertise of the local economic and social fabric. This still has to be worked on by the Member States; there is no evidence so far that such integrated services are emerging. At the recent conference, 'Adult lifelong learning in a Europe of knowledge', Eskilstuna, 21-23 March 2001, the absence of true examples of holistic approaches to guidance and lack of action in this whole field were commented on. Scant information on developments in this report bears out this need for more concerted efforts to provide local guidance services for all, staffed with competent, adequately trained professionals.

The majority of initiatives presently taking place within the education system are actions aimed at preventing failure and dropout through educational and vocational guidance. These include different types of support systems for potential early leavers in the form of tutoring, proactive follow-up measures, etc. If these are not enough, the approach is usually to turn to individualised support from a specialist, with the possibility of additional assistance, perhaps from a psychologist or remedial courses, etc., which involves developing an individual pathway or plan to help such young people obtain a qualification.

Tools and processes to detect and measure early school leaving are improving. This allows more efficient prevention and personalised follow-up, for those who have left the system without qualifications, to be developed.

Several attempts have been made to provide databases on offers of education and employment, and now the Commission is compiling information on learning opportunities throughout the EU which will be linked to Eures to provide a European portal on jobs and learning opportunities. The technical barriers which existed may to a large extent have disappeared with the advent of Internet; however, problems of updating and maintaining such global instruments still exist. There may be a better chance of keeping smaller initiatives up to date. Furthermore, emphasis is now on bringing services closer to the customer in relation to what is available in his/her immediate learning and working environment (see also Key Message 6), this applies equally to guidance and information as well as to learning centres.

Actions at European level

The European Commission supports a number of initiative and pilot projects on the issue of guidance and information networking through the **Socrates, Leonardo and Youth programmes,** the Equal Initiative, and previously through the **Adapt** and **Employment Community Initiatives.** (See also Chapter on Key Message 2 in relation to the Structural Funds).

The **Leonardo da Vinci** programme directly supported the piloting of the **Euroguidance network.** This network of National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance actively promotes mobility within Europe, particularly for people undergoing initial vocational training or lifelong learning. The Euroguidance network provides information on education and training opportunities in Europe, for both guidance practitioners and citizens at large, and supports the exchange of quality information on education and training systems and on qualifications in the European Union, the European Economic Area and Central and Eastern European Countries. It operates by forming a contact network for the guidance services of Europe, exchanging quality careers information, answering individual enquiries and providing details of practice both established and innovatory between those guidance services.

The network is open to guidance counsellors throughout Europe to support them with regard to mobility issues. It undertakes pilot and development projects, e.g. **Estia**, a gateway to existing national websites; **Academia**, provides two-week placements for guidance counsellors in other European countries; **Go-Between**, the career counsellor as broker between demand and supply in adult education.

Within the framework of the Youth programme, a European Network for the dissemination of European information was created. **Eurodesk** provides online services and free telephone enquiry answering services at national or regional level for young people and those who work with them. Using specially developed multi-lingual enquiry answering software, the Eurodesk staff can offer fast and accurate answers to enquiries. Eurodesk aims to increase young people's access to European information, including: funding information – European funding programmes and budget lines and national funding sources; contacts – European and national level organisations, and other resources, documents, publications, training packs, etc. The Eurodesk Network now has partners in 23 countries with more than 150 Eurodesk sites providing information services at national and regional levels. By use of a specially developed database, all the Eurodesk partners can share and exchange information electronically and always have access to a wide range of up-to-date information.

The **European Employment Services** (Eures) aims to facilitate the free movement of workers within 17 countries of the European Economic Area. Partners in the network include public employment services, trade unions and employer organisations. The European Commission coordinates the partnership.

The objectives of Eures are:

- to inform, counsel and provide advice to potential mobile workers on job opportunities and living and working conditions in the European Economic Area;
- to assist employers trying to recruit workers from other countries;
- to provide particular advice and guidance to workers and employers in crossborder regions.

The service functions around a **network of some 500 Euroadvisers** who can provide expert advice and guidance on looking for work in another country, and on the living and working conditions in different countries and a recruitment service for employers. They can also provide information on vocational training. They are supported in their work by an IT system which allows job vacancies to be exchanged between the public employment services, and they also have access to an extensive database on living and working conditions. In crossborder regions, special structures have been set up to meet the special needs of these areas together with the normal objectives of Eures, in which labour mobility is foremost.

Dialogue with citizens is a website which informs citizens of the EU about their rights. Guides and national factsheets provide details about EU citizens' rights to work, live, study, buy goods and services, travel, on equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and on how to access these rights in each EU country.

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In particular it offers information on rights concerning:
- opportunities to study in another EU country;
- employment vacancies, a link to Eures;
- job training opportunities;
- the European Voluntary Service.

The European Commission's **New Strategy on building European Labour Markets by 2005** makes proposals for a 'One-stop European Mobility Information Site' to compliment dialogue with citizens and build on the experience of Eures. The site would provide comprehensive information to citizens on key aspects of jobs, mobility and learning opportunities in Europe. This was endorsed in the conclusions of the Stockholm European Council, 23-24 March 2001.

5.1 Providing holistic information and pro-active guidance for learning and career opportunities

Summary

Guidance is still primarily of the kind provided by public services to young people choosing a career or those adults outside the labour market who wish to return. A 'holistic' style of provision, able to address a range of needs and demands from a wide public, including non-learners who must be attracted to the learning net, is not yet a reality.

▶ In Spain, teams that provide **psychological and pedagogical guidance** are one of the practical resources of the Spanish school system for helping to monitor and counsel children from a very young age. These teams assume responsibility for tutoring, taking appropriate early action and, where necessary, diagnosing particular educational needs associated with a specific (sensory, motor or psychic) handicap. The most important actions relate to the establishment of support facilities to personalise education by adapting it to the needs of each child. These facilities are provided by school guidance services. In basic (as in pre-primary) education, school administrative authorities set up special services for tutoring and psychological and pedagogic school guidance to ensure good quality teaching and, at the same time, provide for personalised teaching while considering the personal development and individual characteristics of pupils. During this stage, teachers in their role as tutors are responsible for the way pupils are guided. From that point onwards, the tutoring strategy contains measures which help pupils fit into the life of their school and encourage communication with their families. Similarly, teachers are responsible for smoothing out the learning difficulties of pupils and adapting their curriculum. They must also work jointly with the guidance team. Moreover, adaptations to the curriculum are possible for pupils who have special educational needs, and measures are introduced if children do not achieve the goals that have been set. School authorities decide whether it is necessary to bolster the team of teaching staff with a team of specialists in educational therapy, listen-

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ing skills and speech acquisition. The aim of the academic and professional guidance is to encourage the personal development of pupils and their ability to take decisions about their academic and professional future. It is offered in practice by tutors and departments of guidance in schools.

In upper secondary education, the specific measures linked to the concept of lifelong learning may be sub-divided into two main groups: first, the responsibilities of tutors and guidance departments which are especially significant as regards the various educational options and the transition from the school system to the world of work; and, secondly, adaptation of the curriculum for pupils with special needs, for whom measures have been introduced ranging from necessary curricular adaptations to exemption from studying particular subjects in certain cases. In vocational secondary education, one of the priority aims is that pupils should acquire a professional maturity and identity that motivate them to consider new forms of learning, and enable them to adapt to possible changes in qualifications. Besides the general measures already mentioned, there are other specific measures implemented at this level, such as an increasingly close relationship between schools and firms, both of which are complementary as far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned. Within school counselling departments, a member of the teaching staff is specifically responsible for career guidance; furthermore, the social partners are involved in the planning and management of vocational training via what is known as 'joint training', in so far as it entails close relations and an exchange of services between the production sector and the school system. This activity takes the form of a series of initiatives such as joint development, by school administrative authorities and the world of work, of a catalogue of professional qualifications containing the different kinds of training that the school system is meant to provide. Vocational training also includes measures intended for pupils with special needs, so that they can be trained in accordance with their potential.

▶ In France, the ***Nouvelles chances*** (fresh opportunities) programme (already referred to in relation to pedagogical innovation; see Chapter dedicated to the Memorandum Key Message 3) contributes to the implementation of a **fresh approach to counselling**. One of the goals of the programme is greater familiarity with the school population concerned: improved data-gathering via appropriate statistical mechanisms, monitoring systems in each school or catchment area, bringing different players together to exchange information, and the development of research on this specific target group to improve understanding of early school drop-out. To strengthen specific initiatives in the array of measures generally concerned with the integration of pupils at school, indicators are being developed for improved coordination of the effort involved, while the provision of training for which schools and firms are jointly responsible, as well as the numbers of those who benefit from it, are being increased.

In higher education, France has acted to prevent premature drop-out from the system by initiating different reforms of the organisation of the first stage of university studies. They have involved introduction of **an initial six-month 'guidance' stage** in all courses for the *Diplôme d'études universitaires générales* (DEUG, or first general university diploma), **points at which students can change their subject preferences,** much wider use of teach-

ing in small groups and the development of tutoring for students in their first two years by students at the second stage of their university course and postgraduates.

In France, the ***contrat d'orientation*** (guidance contract) is aimed at young people aged 22 and over who do not hold a diploma of technological or vocational education, and who have not completed their second cycle of general education. Young holders of a guidance contract placement are paid employees of a firm. The contract itself requires a signed agreement between the employer and the one or more bodies responsible for implementing vocational guidance of this kind. During placements, employers have to ensure that young trainees are involved in activities to help them towards appropriate tasks and responsibilities. Activities may consist in training to a certain required level, skills appraisal, the drawing up of a career plan and efforts to find long-term employment. Forms of guidance may vary in accordance with the initial training of the young person concerned, as well as his/her experience or knowledge – or lack of it – of the world of work, and the existence, or otherwise, of a career plan. For this reason and depending on circumstances, the activities associated with guidance may also be extremely varied (Centre Inffo, 2001).

Wage-earners who lose their jobs for economic reasons and have established an Assedic (Association for Industrial and Commercial Employment) agreement for retraining receive special financial allocations for this purpose from their Association for a six-month period. They may also receive special qualifications appraisals/guidance *(bilan évaluation-orientation)* from the ANPE (National Agency for Employment) or the APEC (Association for Executive and Manager Employment) or other recognised bodies. Appraisals of this kind are intended to:

- supplement earlier assessments, evaluating the progress of the persons concerned, so that they can determine whether they require a particular form of training and are sufficiently qualified for it;
- provide, in all cases, for individual monitoring during the period of the above-mentioned agreement (Centre Inffo, 2001).

See also the skills record *(bilan de compétences)* in the Chapter 4 concerned with Key Message 4 of the *Memorandum*.

▶ The ***Stay in School*** initiative in Ireland comprising school-led student retention focuses on special support to those at risk of drop-out. Established in 1991, the project initially involved 23 schools and aims eventually to mobilise over 50. Expansion of the recently established National Educational Psychological Service Agency is also planned with a view to having a comprehensive service for schools in place by the end of 2004. In recent years, numerous specific initiatives have been implemented for the benefit of children at risk of failure or dropping out at school. A very extensive remedial system offers support to those who encounter problems during their schooling. Schools have also been provided with more assistant teachers and additional resources for children with special needs. The aim of a three-year programme, launched in January 2001 and involving 2 300 schools is to

iron out the educational inequalities experienced by some target groups. Additional teachers and other resources have been provided for urban and rural areas in which children from disadvantaged backgrounds are most highly concentrated.

When fully implemented, The **Educational Welfare Act 2000** provides for raising the upper age of compulsory schooling from 15 to 16, or until the point at which the lower secondary school certificate is awarded. It will also establish an educational welfare service to monitor student attendance at lessons and take action to help those at risk of dropping out. This service will provide for appropriate placements, if necessary, and help to ensure that contact is maintained with children aged between 16 and 18 who leave school to find employment, so that they can continue their education and training.

For those who have left school early, **Youthreach** provides an out-of-school integrated education, training and work experience programme to prepare young people for work or progression to further education or training. Some 7 000 places nationally are provided on the programme, assisted by a guidance, counselling and psychological service and childcare.

Supporting and accompanying measures have also been taken in higher education to boost the participation of disadvantaged groups. A major investment programme is being put in place and will focus on:

- college-based outreach and support programmes, and mature student second-chance programmes;
- support for students with disabilities (including equipment, materials, care or interpretative support, guidance etc.);
- additional financial aid targeted at the poorest students;
- development of strategic links and specific support programmes with second-level schools in disadvantaged areas to encourage and motivate pupils to aspire to third-level education;
- provision of access officers in third-level colleges;
- development of flexible entry, provision and accreditation arrangements.

Finally, a pilot **adult guidance service**, funded by the Department of Education and Science, has been established in Ireland. It focuses on urban and rural areas and aims at embracing the span of provision in literacy, VTOS – vocational training opportunity scheme, adult and community education programmes. This initiative will be a vital component in the strategic development and expansion of adult education services in Ireland. It will build on the work undertaken by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) to date in this field and will serve to strengthen access, and the professionalism and quality of the service provided for adults participating in education and training. It will explore the scope of developing a national website of learning opportunities which can be updated and accessed locally, provide telephone helplines, as well as ICT information points in libraries and community education services, and provide training in front line guidance and counselling skills for staff across the adult education and training sector. The

aim is to expand the service on a phased basis with a view to having a national service in place by the end of 2006.

- Guidance in Member States is generally seen as a tool to be used in the fight against unemployment as it can help to disseminate information on both labour market and individuals needs. Many countries are mainly interested in the guidance and counselling of young people entering the labour market. In Italy, the *Confindustria* (Italian Employers' Confederation) therefore dedicated the month of November to the theme of vocational guidance. Numerous initiatives were held in many Italian cities to help guide young people in their choices and in the transition period from school to work. On 15 November 2000, the 7th **National *Orientagiovani* Day**, organised by *Confindustria* and Sicily Manufacturers' Federation, was held to help young people to learn about the needs of enterprises and to address their vocational choices.

  Its main objective was to create closer links between the world of work and the educational system, by optimising the role of the industrial associations as partners in the educational systems. Therefore, at the same time as the meeting in Palermo, there were also initiatives in schools and industries in 50 other cities. In Milan, there was a series of meetings with young people interested in learning more about graphics, chemistry and paper; in Varese, a new web portal dedicated to school and training was presented (http://www.scuolava.it/). In Rome, a thousand young people met young entrepreneurs. At this event, young people were able to insert data concerning their CV and expectations via terminals connected on-line (see also Key Message 4, European CV), thus forming a database available to schools and enterprises, which for the latter could represent a significant tool to fill their personnel requirements, while young people obtain yet another opportunity to find a job.

- On 1 January 2001, the Netherlands initiated a **career advisers** pilot project for those aged under 23 who left school too early and are intending to work or already do so. People in this position are supported by career advisers who guide them towards a basic qualification via a work-learning trajectory. The development of proactive counselling arrangements, alongside the training as such of those who have left education early, is an important aspect of the pilot project. When the experimental phase comes to an end on 31 December 2002, it is possible the system may be extended throughout the country.

  Furthermore, a report published in February 2001 on the results of the scheme to counter school drop-out has drawn attention to the importance of **monitoring drop-out accurately**. Marked improvement in the registration of drop-out will be possible when the new Regional Registration and Coordination Law is enacted. Under this Law, schools will be obliged to inform the local authorities about the number of drop-outs. The authorities will then be responsible for redirecting the pupils concerned towards the formal sector or, where this is not possible, enrolling them in a form of linked work-and-training so that they obtain a qualification equivalent to a vocational apprenticeship. In the first instance, the new legislation may (artificially) increase the number of recorded dropouts because it improves procedures for monitoring and recording this target group. The provisions of its initial version

only applied to compulsory education. However in February 2001, an amendment was incorporated to take account also of drop-out after the completion of compulsory schooling by those still aged under 23 who have not obtained so-called 'start qualifications'.

Under the Handicapped Reintegration Act (REA), the Dutch government has increased in April 2000 the **funds available for tailor-made trajectories for the disabled** which comprise guidance, training and work experience on the road back to employment.

- In Finland, guidance and counselling measures are supported by centralised, net-based student selection systems, which facilitate the collection of information on available educational programmes. Guidance activities aim to help and support individuals with questions relating to education and career planning. It is stipulated in curricula that pupils and students should receive sufficient guidance and counselling at all educational levels. A pilot study due to end in 2002 is developing a web site which includes information on all educational provision. When complete it will be accompanied by guidance services provided though the network of libraries and community centres.

- Sweden has two guidance and counselling services: the National Agency for Education and the municipalities. At national level, the National Agency for Education provides advice and clarification of specific issues with the use of a number of information channels such as a web site, a computer network for schools, a newsletter, conferences and seminars. At local level, a great deal of study guidance is provided through the upper secondary schools. In 2000, municipalities organised a **national knowledge week** to disseminate adult education information locally. The week was aimed at enhancing the understanding of the needs of adult education and lifelong learning from the perspective of both the individual and society. The event was concentrated in a week (from 10 to 16 April), so the media could cover it and highlight the week for future participants. The purpose was to coordinate the different activities that the municipalities and other educational providers usually carry out in order to present their courses and programmes for the forthcoming year. The work targeted those most in need of learning through debates, exhibitions, reports from newspapers, TV and radio, campaigns in the streets and shopping centres and special announcements to all non-employed. The event was repeated in 2001 from 19 to 25 March.

The International Week of Adult Learning, proposed by Unesco, was launched at EXPO 2000 in Hannover, 8 September. This event was paralleled in the **Adult Learners' Week** held in some Member States and in numerous countries around the world. A global colloquium on lifelong learning, run from June to October 2000, including a **web debate** initiated by research networks involved, and a **Festival of Lifelong Learning**, initiated by the University of East London, taking place from May 2000 to July 2001, are similar initiatives.

5.2 Providing easy access to information and qualified guidance locally, as well as user-friendly tools for self-guidance

Summary

Databases and Internet enable people to think and participate globally, while acting locally. But the glut of information has to be interpreted in the context of each individual. At European level, as seen above, systems have been put in place to pool information at various levels and to make it available locally for users through online databases and contact points. To date, interest has focused on creating large databases at European or national level. Such initiatives are relatively complex, both from a technical and maintenance point of view. Some of them have also tried to overcome language barriers by providing multilingual interfaces.

However, many smaller databases and information points now exist at local level which are easier to update. With the advent of Internet, interconnectivity between the bases is no longer a problem. More important is having skilled personnel to exploit and interpret the information. The stage is set therefore for the next generation of bottom-up developments, in which guidance practitioners would network and exploit local resources more effectively. The German Eures unit has developed in this direction. Each of the Federal Länder specialises in providing information about employment and learning opportunities in one of the Member States.

Investment is still focused on databases and infrastructure and not on the people and the skills they need to inform, advise and guide citizens in their educational, vocational and life choices.

- Promoting school and vocational guidance by **using external and internal school resources** (psychology and counselling services) is a priority for the Portuguese education system. For example, ANEFA supports the setting up of **S@bER + clubs**, which are neighbourhood-based and run by local public or private entities concerned with catering for and providing information and support to adults interested in their own particular forms of lifelong education and training.

  Also in Portugal, a number of initiatives have been launched under the National Action Plan for Employment (NAP). Two accessible Internet databases are concerned with provision in education and training and related future job opportunities, namely ***Sete Léguas*** (seven 'leagues') and ***Rotas*** (highways). *Sete Léguas* is under the responsibility of the DAPP (Department for Evaluation, Prospective and Planning, Ministry of Education), *Rota* also relies on the collaboration of DAPP in all matters related to the education system. As to ***Azimut***, this is a programme for school and vocational information and guidance. *Azimut* will be managed by the *Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional* (IEFP, or Institute for Employment and Vocational Training).

- In the United Kingdom, the local information, counselling and guidance services help adults to identify appropriate training opportunities. They work in cooperation with **Learndirect**

(an initiative discussed in greater detail in relation to bringing learning closer to learners (see Chapter dedicated to the *Memorandum* Key Message 6), placement services and the **Connexions** service specifically for young people. The *Connexions* Service will provide information, advice and guidance for all young people aged 13 to 19 to help them make the most of their educational and vocational choices and development opportunities during their teenage years and prepare for successful transition to work and adult responsibilities. The Service will be provided to young people via a range of means, including a network of personal advisers who will give advice and guidance, broker access to specialised support and, in some instances, provide personal development opportunities.

Via a free national helpline, the Learndirect initiative also offers advice on many topics, from funding and childcare facilities to courses available near the user. Clients are directed to local advisors for guidance with their learning choice. The **Scottish Learndirect** has a web site with extensive information on learning and career opportunities and guidance, including a useful help function which explains use of the site.

In Wales, the **Careers Wales** service became fully operational in April 2001 and offers counselling and guidance services to people of all ages. Careers Wales is a new national branding under which the existing eight Careers Companies in Wales will operate, delivering careers advice and guidance, youth gateway, enterprise and business awareness through a regional structure.

5.3 Supporting the development of training for guidance and counselling practitioners

Summary

The role of the counsellor is paramount in providing an interface between the information tools and the needs of the individual. It is not a function that can be replaced by computer applications. Apart from the brokerage and information service the counsellor provides to assist clients identify what suits their needs and judge the quality and authenticity of offers, etc., the counsellor has a position of trust in a process which may take time. For clients who need advice and counselling over and above the choice of career or education, the relationship with the counsellor may be a long one that has to be returned to at regular intervals. Having a trained person to provide this service locally is therefore essential. Reforms of the entire guidance system are in some cases in preparation or already underway in order to meet the new demands for guidance and the need to make the training of counsellors more professional. Nevertheless, initiatives to redesign or overhaul the profession of counsellor to meet the needs of today's reality are rare. Evidence suggests that the emphasis is currently on developing the tools rather than skilled personnel to use them effectively. There is perhaps a false assumption that by putting information on Internet, we can by-pass the guidance practitioners.

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- In Italy, educational reform aims to reinforce counselling at all levels of education. An exceptional effort has been made to develop and strengthen the support services entrusted specifically to **highly specialised staff** (project leaders, coordinators, tutors, information officers, guidance specialists, counsellors, assessors, etc.). These services – provided by the CIS (*Centri de Servizi Integrati* – integrated service centres) and the *Servizi per l'impiego* (employment services), which work at regional and local level – promote access to training and mobility between systems and the workplace. The services provided are attached to the following sectors: information, motivation, guidance, certification, skills assessment, counselling in training and professional matters, active monitoring to prevent drop-out, the training of trainers and placements. Actions have been organised in conjunction with the employment services to ensure that participants find employment or continue their training programme.

- In Sweden, an **initiative is under way to provide counselling at all levels of education**. A Committee known as *Utredning om vägledning i skolväsendet* was set up in February 2000 to identify the counselling required by different groups of learners within the education and training system, and to improve the access to this kind of service of those who are most vulnerable. The Committee is clarifying how responsibility should be divided between individuals, the local authority and central government. It is also drawing up proposals on the initial and in-service training of guidance counsellors and the conditions for developing a common information system. It is understood to have submitted its findings in June 2001.

KEY MESSAGE 6: BRINGING LEARNING CLOSER TO HOME

European Commission *Memorandum* on lifelong learning

Local management of education and training brings learning opportunities close to people's home environment, enabling provision to be more effectively coordinated with related services such as transport, childminding and social services, etc.

Social networks and associations in closest touch with people are also based at local level. Their familiarity with requirements, as well as the back-up facilities they are able to provide, mean that local learning initiatives are more likely to be successful.

Scattered and remote groups of people may now be reached more easily as a result of ICT which, at less cost, offers impressive organisational flexibility, especially in relation to limitations on time.

As a result of developing networks of learning communities, area partnerships and integrated approaches, education and training are becoming local powerhouses for social renewal.

Summary

Local arrangements for bringing education and training closer to learners are beginning to emerge in some areas. However, typical ways in which this is occurring are extremely varied both from the standpoint of structure and the focus of the action concerned. Really meaningful identification of good practice calls for detailed case studies responsive to distinctive features of the general context in which such arrangements are set. Though uncommon, fully integrated approaches, in which a varied range of resources are provided for different target groups with a view to the sustainable development of a particular area, do exist, as illustrated by certain initiatives referred to below.

ICT in all forms (including TV, TV video-conferencing and the Internet) is often a feature of those schemes which have been identified. Where its purpose is to help young people, or adults already pursuing a full-time or part-time occupation, to secure access to training or a professional activity, it seems to be well suited to requirements, particularly as regards the need for flexibility. Where it is mobilised in initiatives for vulnerable groups of people, or those who are difficult to target for geographical but also socio-economic reasons, its effects are harder to assess. Deliberate efforts to gauge its impact do not appear to be widespread, or are under way in certain cases. Given the complex and specific difficulties encountered by these target groups when confronted with educational or training processes of any kind, more frequent reliance on the formal evaluation of such initiatives would no doubt be helpful in devising more effective future action.

Initiatives involving ICT are geared to a wide variety of objectives. Depending on circumstances, the aim should be to offer training or education but also, first of all, to heighten people's awareness of the need for it, to inform them about suitable opportunities and accompanying provision (in terms of financial support and local services, etc.), and to arrange for guidance and access to a variety of databases which include details on matters such as job vacancies. The contribution of ICT to integrated services (for example, in providing access to combined databases concerned with education, training and employment) is especially significant, particularly in that such provision is less costly. Naturally, this does not mean that personalised arrangements involving the training and availability of human resources to provide real guidance to individual users should be overlooked.

Partnerships are tending to become common practice, even though mobilising and sustaining them at the grass roots may sometimes be complicated. They are developing not only between people actively involved in education and training, but also in association with those responsible for matters such as employment, economic development and family policy.

Before undertaking a review of efforts in Member States to bring education and training closer to individual learners, one particular concept merits closer examination, namely that of the learning region.

The *learning region* concept

The cooperation of educational and training establishments with different actors in a regional or local community context to promote economic and/or social innovation through learning, is at the heart of what has been termed the *learning region* (Nyhan et al, 2000). The term 'region' in 'learning region' is to be interpreted in a very broad sense to refer to an area (which can be quite small) with shared objectives or problems, but not necessarily a statutory region with fixed political boundaries. The distinctive innovative feature of a *learning region* is the cooperation between social partners, non-governmental organisations, business and statutory bodies etc. in tackling a problem in a local urban or rural context. The *learning region* concept is not to be seen as a miniature version of a national system, but more as a way of providing a local context for people from different backgrounds and interest groups (schools, trade unions, employers, voluntary groups, etc.) to work and learn together in addressing the needs of their own locality. The governance style tends in many ways to be self-regulating, along networking and horizontal lines. The learning style tends to be task-based and interactive with the focus on the resolution of a local problem.

The distinctive role played by education and training in this is the facilitation and mediation of community learning related to a particular task that the community wishes to address, such as combating unemployment or supporting the start-up of new enterprises (economic development). This learning entails the use of modern activity-based learning methods which promote learning through problem-solving or what has also been called *action-learning*. However, the

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consequences of carrying out this moderation and mediation role and in particular the identification of learning needs, will in many cases give rise to the need for formal education or training courses to be organised for people in the locality. These may deal, for example, with business skills, computer skills or in appropriate cases, literacy skills. In summary, therefore, education and training institutes in the *learning region* are, on the one hand, acting as catalysts for the production of new ideas and, on the other, acting as brokers or mediators enabling different groups (public and private agencies, economic and socially-oriented bodies) to develop the know-how to turn their ideas into reality.

Traditional education and training activities tend to focus on the development of individuals as individuals. The emphasis is also mainly on formal or theoretical knowledge. The *learning region* focus, however, is on problem-based learning activities carried out in the community through partnerships and networks. Accordingly, learning is seen as a community activity rather than an individual-oriented one. The creation of partnerships in which the education and training, social and economic agencies transcend their differences and combine forces in favour of a joint strategy, is crucial for the success of regional learning initiatives. Development is a collective process in which organisations and individuals with different goals come together to produce an outcome that is in the interest of all concerned. Successful partnerships also reflect local circumstances and are not imposed or developed according to some standard model. Indeed durable partnerships are arrived at through a pragmatic consensus-building process.

The adoption of the above approach for education and training entails a strategy of going out to enterprises (particularly small enterprises) and community groups and working with them on tailor-made learning approaches in their own environment. The formal ways in which people learn are complemented by a focused form of learning which is embedded in everyday events. In this way, work and life routines become opportunities for learning.

Universities (and other tertiary education institutions) have a special role in promoting local innovation in a *learning region*. Their involvement in local or community affairs has been referred to as the *third role* of universities, complementing their other two roles of teaching and carrying out research. Many universities are carrying out this function through research partnerships with industry, consultancy to SME networks or by setting up science and technology or business parks often in close proximity to the university campus.

6.1 Developing multi-purpose local centres for the acquisition of knowledge and skills

Summary

A start is being made in setting up regional or local centres. This has not always resulted in schools or training centres being turned into multi-purpose centres. The fact that existing institutions normally possess satisfactory and, indeed, sometimes highly supportive facilities does not mean that they will be converted into multi-purpose centres for the general public almost as a matter of

course. Whether this actually occurs will depend on a whole range of factors, including the extent to which they already engage with the local environment, their experience in forming partnerships, the administrative division of responsibilities, particularly in systems with little decentralisation at local level, the symbolic influence exterted by places such as schools, reluctance to be more responsive to the needs of other users and the existence of strict safety regulations, etc.

An alternative to the conversion of schools and training centres is to set up special local centres from scratch. This option may run counter to the central aim of bringing education and training closer to places with which potential users are already familiar in their daily lives, since it is based on locations which, at the outset, are totally unfamiliar. Consequently, any recommendation in favour of converting schools or training centres, the establishment of special new premises, or the networking of existing locations, should lead, in each case, to consideration of the difficulties, advantages and disadvantages of the proposed approach in comparison to others. This analysis should take account of the context in which the measures envisaged will be implemented. Where the existence of different target groups has been recognised, a variety of locations for education and training may make it easier to associate a particular target group with the kind of facilities that best match its needs. Diversity should not therefore necessarily be ruled out, as long as each location is also capable of offering effective guidance and counselling with regard to all possible options and schemes available.

While the concept of local multi-purpose centres for education and training may come to galvanise the development throughout Europe of centres receptive to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, it is not at present reflected in the existence of a single ideal prototype. The wide variety in the patterns of provision and service offered by known centres is self-evident. They are characterised by their target groups (young drop-outs, poorly qualified adults, immigrants, etc.), their activities (education/training courses, efforts to encourage and structure cooperation, the development of integrated approaches to education, training, counselling and employment, guidance and the provision of information about programmes and associated services, etc.), and by their ultimate goal (sustainable development of the region, meeting the needs of employers, halting unemployment, boosting social integration, improving the quality of education and training, etc.).

A few schemes testify to the existence of highly integrated arrangements. Within a given area, these ambitious initiatives embrace all vulnerable target groups (irrespective of the age or circumstances of those concerned) and appropriate forms of action (including analysis of local or regional needs, the monitoring of groups at risk, individual counselling, identification of possible types of financial assistance, training provision, monitoring of entry or return to the labour market, etc.) by implementing a varied range of partnerships.

The Lisbon European Council conclusions propose to turn schools and training centres into multi-purpose local learning centres, all linked to the Internet and accessible to people of all ages.

- In the Netherlands (Doets, ed., 2001), the ***Regionale Opleidingscentra*** (ROCs, or Regional Education Centres) are a step in this direction. Regional cooperation is seen, in the first

place, in terms of the importance of the contracts between ROCs and the municipalities with regard to the buying-in by the municipalities of the educational and training provision from the ROCs. This is particularly relevant to the responsibility of municipalities for the education and training of premature school-leavers, the provision of general adult education, and in particular the provision of citizenship courses for immigrants. The government argues that the ROCs can only be strong organisations when they are accessible to and serve the needs of an increasingly diverse public of both younger and adult participants. To this end, the ROCs need to become *open learning centres*. One aspect of creating a distinct profile in the region for the ROCs will include improving open lines of communication with a more diverse cross-section of potential learners, particularly those already in work and job-seekers with low levels of qualification. The policy report *BVE on Course: Perspectives for Secondary Vocational Education and Adult Education* (2000), involves the establishment of *regional educational platforms* based upon the key role of the municipalities in regional and local training markets. An intensification of the information, guidance and counselling functions of ROCs in reaching out to these groups is also envisaged. Furthermore, accessibility also involves ROCs providing courses in the evenings for those in work. Many ROCs conducted regional public information campaigns during the national *Week of Learning* in September 2000. This *Week of Learning* was an opportunity to revitalise cooperation at local level, with a view to intensifying efforts to heighten awareness of the importance of learning and bring educational provision closer to citizens. Alongside national initiatives, activities were above all conducted locally and regionally as part of a *learning urban community approach*. The aim was to get bodies involved in both mainstream and 'informal' education to work more closely together and increase opportunities for training so that provision was more geared to the needs of specific groups. Another *Week of Learning* is being organised in September 2001.

While the impact of globalisation leads to an emphasis on the knowledge economy, it is also necessary to recognise that regional economies and labour markets differ significantly within the Netherlands. This applies in particular at the first and second qualification levels, where the ROCs meet the specific needs of regional and local employers, rather than the needs of the national labour market at the third and fourth qualification levels of more geographically mobile employees. With a view to facilitating the articulation between the ROCs and regional labour markets, a number of *Techno-Centres* have been established during 2000. These *Techno-Centres* are intermediary organisations within a provisional framework, which finances the cooperation between vocational education institutions and regional businesses. They are intended to promote the active exploration of bottlenecks in regional and local labour markets, the exchange of knowledge between vocational education institutions and regional businesses, and to encourage closer cooperation between the ROCs and employers. This arrangement will be evaluated in 2002.

- In Austria, a particular kind of **regional learning centre**, which is a sort of educational market place, is undergoing development as part of a study of requirements in the Saalfelden/Salzburg region. This type of centre should meet regional needs with programmes to improve the access of disadvantaged persons to continuing education and

training, particularly at post-compulsory level, in regions in which training opportunities are scarce. When the research into needs is complete (2001), a pilot regional training centre will be launched and tested over the five years from 2001 to 2006, with European Social Fund support. Very special attention will be paid to the development of self-learning and on-line distance courses, 'second chance' schemes and university provision of continuing education and training in cooperation with regional educational centres. Studies to evaluate the pilot project will be carried out in its final phase, in order to determine the effectiveness of its programmes and of the model as such.

- **Schools** in Sweden **are opening up for use by the community after school hours** (OECD, 2000). The impetus comes from the fact that the schools have good technical facilities, particularly their high speed Internet connections, which means they are well placed to fill the role of local learning centres.

- In the United Kingdom, local learning models are mushrooming. At an administrative level, ***Learning Partnerships*** bring together existing local partnership arrangements covering post-16 and lifelong learning into single strategic bodies. Their development stems from a joint commitment by central government and the representative bodies of the *Further Education, Training and Enterprise Council, Careers Service* and local government sectors. *Learning Partnerships* play a key role in the government's social inclusion and regeneration agendas. Their key objectives are to widen participation in learning, increase attainment, improve standards and meet the skills challenge.

  The **University for Industry** initiative (UfI) has led to the establishment of a network of several hundreds of local centres. UfI seeks to facilitate access to learning on the part of firms as well as individuals, and steer them regularly towards (re)training and updating of skills. Its mid-term aim is to improve career opportunities and revitalise competitiveness. UfI acts as an intermediate agency between, on the one hand, individuals and firms on the lookout for training and, on the other, training providers. In this context, a service network known as *learndirect* has been set up. It offers access to Internet training via a network of some 700 centres in sports and shopping centres, libraries and other local community public premises. Over 450 training programmes are on offer, 80% of which may be accessed directly on line. The direct telephone helpline (0800 100 900) offers free information on learning opportunities, as well as on prices and related services such as childminding. The *learndirect* web site (http://www.learndirect.co.uk) provides access to a database containing over 500 000 training courses, career assessment mechanisms and a career profile database, along with direct access to the entire range of *learndirect* learning materials.

  Scotland has developed its own **Scottish University for Industry (SUfI)** whose on-line services (*Learndirect Scotland*) have been operational since October 2000. There is a free telephone helpline and a network of centres throughout the whole country. No less than 300 local centres are planned by 2002. The local authorities which are responsible for education in Scotland are making an important contribution to this initiative and 31 of the 32 authorities have implemented operational strategies in the field.

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The National Assembly for Wales has recently introduced proposals to improve school standards and support lifelong education and training with back-up from ICT. The local education authorities and their local partners have been asked to make proposals for the **development of ICT learning centres in (secondary) schools and other public meeting places in the local community**, as well as action on behalf of underprivileged target groups and children with special needs. This **ICT for Learning Strategy** got under way for a three-year period in 1999/2000. The first funding instalment has been used to provide portable computers for around 330 primary schoolteachers involved in a novel digital literacy scheme, as well as the heads of secondary schools. The same allocation is also being used to equip the National Library and the museums of Wales with computer facilities.

- In Iceland, the task of the government as far as lifelong learning is concerned is to ensure that everyone has unimpeded access to it. Its growth is largely dependent on individuals and companies being able readily to obtain information and professional guidance and, in this respect, it is of interest that Iceland is preparing an information system on permanently available studies. This database will provide easy-to-access information in a standard format on all educational institutions and their curricula and is due to become operational at the end of 2001.

6.2 Using ICT to bring learning closer to people

Summary

Special initiatives are being reinforced by the implementation of accompanying measures. The purpose of some of these is to familiarise vulnerable sub-groups with the use of ICT by providing them with equipment, materials and counselling. TV campaigns have been launched to target greater numbers of people not easily reached via conventional education and training locations. Other accompanying measures are more broadly targeted, such as those coordinated by libraries which make facilities and tools available for their users.

Special initiatives dependent on the use of ICT are numerous. However, it is hard to assess how they are perceived, used and appreciated by those at whom they are primarily directed. They serve to heighten awareness and motivate people to return to education or training, while informing them about available provision, and dismantling barriers around isolated social groups or those hard to reach for geographical or other reasons. They also facilitate improved management of resources by avoiding duplication and enabling economies of scale. They extend provision and are conducive to developing and maintaining partnerships. They increase the flexibility of programmes and their responsiveness to individual requirements, particularly in the case of people simultaneously engaged in professional occupations. They simplify the provision of integrated services, as different web sites can be easily linked into a single network. And they offer access to tools and content for the benefit of teachers as well as learners.

Examples or projects involving virtual schools or universities, which may sometimes be accessed from places where people gather together in public (such as sports and shopping centres, etc.), educational TV, teaching material, and centres to develop the use of all forms of ICT are steadily taking shape. Schemes of this kind are a part of an overall drive to enhance employability and promote social cohesion and, sometimes, greater cultural interest in other languages and countries.

Accompanying measures

Apart from the more structured developments described below, other bottom-up or grass-roots initiatives are taking place at local level. In some Member States, there is a growing emphasis on the use of libraries as part of the local learning fabric. Public libraries offer access to technology and particularly the Internet for those people who do not have a personal computer at home or at work. They often have back-up support and a certain degree of coaching from the library staff, who are increasingly becoming leading experts in the use of ICT. Ireland is emphasising the building of a strong **Public Access Network** (PAN), which it sees as a key contributor to developing lifelong learning (ISC, 2000). In Finland, **public libraries** also form part of initiatives to encourage especially older adults to develop their computer skills, and to get acquainted with computer-assisted learning. Finnish vocational education has systematically developed library and information services for many years. These projects include computer-based training and network pedagogics. The **People's Network** in the United Kingdom aims to have all public libraries connected to the information superhighway by 2002. One of its goals is to support lifelong learning.

The **ICT Learning Centres** throughout the United Kingdom are geared to serving the needs of those who cannot otherwise afford to use computers or the Internet. This latter initiative is of significance as an attempt to bridge the digital divide, which tends to mirror the social and educational divides. Research for example in the Netherlands shows that single mothers, people with few qualifications, the unemployed and people aged over 65, have most problems with digital equipment. Government is advocating that educational television can also make a contribution to reaching out to those social groups who are excluded from both education and work, and have limited financial resources. There have been a number of successful experiments with regional and local educational television programmes that are run by ROCs. Consideration is being given to the use of television to introduce people to personal computers with low-threshold programmes such as the BBC series **Computers don't Byte** (Doets et al, 2001).

Advances are being made in digital broadcasting and related interactive services as an opportunity for distance learning and education broadcasting services in general. Ireland, Finland and the UK will soon witness progress in this direction.

Specific initiatives

- In Germany, the incorporation of information and communication technology into general education, vocational training and higher education remains a priority concern. Out of some EUR 700 million (DEM 1.4 billion) made available by the federal government for the

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proactive scheme ***Anschluss statt Ausschluss*** (Inclusion, not Exclusion) between 2001 and 2004, around EUR 130 million (DEM 255 million) are being allocated to vocational training institutions so that they can expand their computer resources. Around EUR 66 million (DEM 130 million) are being earmarked for the development of new forms of distance education. The computer sector is moving increasingly towards the development of educational software, while sector-oriented solutions are being devised for trade associations, and the crafts and other sectors reliant on a high proportion of labour.

In several areas of federal administration, **various models of distance education** have been subsidised under numerous schemes for continuing education and training. Some of these initiatives are intended to supplement the reorganisation of training at the workplace and continuing training, in such a way that computer-assisted learning and training programmes are made compatible.

- In Spain, the Autonomous Communities have launched several initiatives to simplify access to learning based on use of ICT. One such example, ***Averroes***, **the Andalucia educational telematics network**, is offering new resources to teachers and students to meet expectations generated among the educational community by the new technologies. Another example, ***Aldea Digital***, is a scheme for linking rural schools in electronic networks. Its aim is to improve the educational use of technological resources in these schools so as to break down the sense of isolation their pupils experience by bringing them into contact with young people from other countries who speak other languages. Both projects got under way in 1998.

- In Greece, **the open and distance university** which offered just two pilot projects in 1998, now has 5000 students aged over 23 who can access around 20 courses organised to meet their requirements. They are supervised by tutoring advisers, use materials specially devised to encourage involvement and interaction on their part, and receive support from counselling centres located in six different cities. In 2001, 10 000 students are expected.

- Italy offers virtual learning opportunities in selective subjects. November 2001 will see the launch of the first on-line degree in Italian language and culture for foreigners not residing in Italy. The project, which is being promoted by the consortium **Italian Culture On the Net (ICON)** grouping approximately 20 Italian universities, aims at spreading Italian language and culture throughout the world by setting up a virtual university for the humanities accessible via the Internet at the site www.italicon.it. The course offers four initial degree options, namely language teaching, history/culture, literature and entertainment. In addition, ICON already offers users access to a digital library containing more than one thousand works, a virtual museum and an encyclopaedia developed in collaboration with the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* (Italian Encyclopaedia Institute).

A **special agreement with the public broadcasting system, RAI Educational**, has been signed in order to provide distance education and training opportunities at two levels, namely teacher training and education and training for young people and adults.

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- In Luxembourg, the **first pilot experiments in open and distance education** making use of the Internet and/or TV video-conferencing were conducted in 1999 and 2000. The technological and teaching experience acquired will enable adult education administrators to establish, in the medium-term, a system of open and distance education for the general public.

- The **development of distance learning and virtual environments** in the Netherlands is part of the current ICT initiatives, which largely focus on major investment programmes in initial education from primary through secondary to higher education. As in most countries, this investment is based upon improving the numbers of computers in schools, the availability of software and access to the Internet. The government intends to link all educational institutions to the national ***Kennisnet*** ([22]) (Knowledge Network) by the end of 2001.

  In the areas of initial and post-initial vocational education, emphasis is placed upon the application of ICT in order to facilitate flexible, tailor-made and individualised learning. The recent inter-departmental policy document, *In Good Jobs*, proposes the promotion and development of **distance and virtual learning** in different sectors of the economy, in order to prepare workers for the ICT skills demanded by the labour market and to utilise the efficiency of ICT in the delivery of education and training. It also refers to the development of virtual learning for job-seekers through the ***Stichting Website Network*** (Foundation Website Network), which is a collective initiative by the social service departments of local authorities, job centres and a number of ICT firms. This network enables job seekers to follow courses on-line and to consult virtual databanks with vacant jobs. As part of the electronic highway outlined in the NAP 2000 ([23]), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is currently examining the possibilities for a ***Digitale Vakschool*** (Virtual Training College), which will facilitate on-line access to interactive websites in support of worked-based learning. Furthermore, in July 2000 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science announced that a review of the future of the Open University had resulted in a decision to transform it into a virtual university (Doets et al, 2001).

  Also in the Netherlands, an **educational television** pilot project is being launched in mid-2001. Regional educational television will be specifically for groups hard to reach via conventional provision (such as immigrants, those undergoing vocational rehabilitation, the long-term unemployed, etc.). Programmes will be developed with a view to bringing the people concerned closer to their normal daily environment, and strong links will be estab-

([22]) The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has commissioned the *Kennisnet* project and is offering connections to institutions of vocational training and adult education, teacher training institutes, primary schools and secondary schools. Over 2.5 million people will be using *Kennisnet* in a year's time. Each one will have a unique log-in name that gives them access to *Kennisnet* 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By 31 December 2001, all Dutch pupils in group 5 (primary year 5, for those aged 8-9) and up, and all teachers and school heads will have access to *Kennisnet*. The *Kennisnet* website (www.kennisnet.nl) already provides access to several thousands of pages of information, designed or assembled especially for pupils, teachers, school heads and parents. All these users have their own domain on the *Kennisnet* site.

([23]) National Action Plan for Employment developed in the framework of the European Employment Strategy.

lished with the regional educational infrastructure (including counsellors, supervisors, etc.). The aim is to motivate these groups so that they return to learning activity. The pilot project is running throughout 2001 and 2002, and will then probably be broadened in scope. It above all involves programmes for heightening awareness, whose central topics are concerned with basic skills, skills required in every day life, health, safety and safety precautions and the world of work, etc.

- The Finnish education system (Nyyssölä/Hämäläinen, 2001) emphasises the development of distance learning and virtual environments to improve the learning opportunities of adults and safeguard regional equality in terms of access to learning. Distance learning has been developed particularly within adult education (distance upper secondary schools). In vocational education, distance learning is being developed in the form of net pedagogy and **virtual schools**. Those involved in vocational education can also benefit from courses at distance upper secondary schools. Virtual school offers opportunities for employed persons to study general or vocational upper secondary syllabi, and for secondary students to take courses or study modules offered by other educational institutions. It aims to develop and implement study opportunities of a high pedagogic quality which are independent of place and time and involve the varied use of ICT-based distance and contact education, create equal opportunities for students of all ages, and offer opportunities for all educational institutions to participate in the virtual school, etc. Finland will have also a **virtual university** by 2004 based on a consortium of several universities, businesses, enterprises and research institutes. In Finland, the **Open University** is not a separate institution. Many Finnish higher education institutions offer open learning services and are networking to develop these services further.

- In Sweden, the **National Schools for Adults** (SSV), already referred to under Memorandum Key Message 3, constitutes another example of the use of ICT in bringing learning closer to the learner. SSV is a nation-wide Swedish distance educator that supplements the adult education offered by the municipalities through distance education programmes and courses at upper secondary level. SSV is a public authority reporting directly to the government and the Ministry of Education and Science, and has also been assigned a strategic role in the development of distance education. In 1998, the Swedish government launched an initiative for developing new methods of ICT-based distance learning for adults. As pointed out earlier, SSV was part of the task force responsible for launching projects to develop new methods and support flexible learning. The initiative as such ran until December 2000, but activities are continuing within SSV. For 2001, it has been allocated EUR 660 000 (SEK 6 million) for the further development of distance learning methods and the provision of support to the municipalities in promoting distance education.

  The **Swedish Agency for Distance Education** (Distum) was set up in 1999 with the aim of supporting and promoting the development and application of distance education based on ICT. The agency's operations encompass universities and colleges, adult educational associations and folk high schools throughout the country. It allocates funds, follows up, evaluates and serves as a network-based information centre and exchange with other international bodies dealing with IT-based distance education projects.

▶ In the United Kingdom, the **UK Online Centres** are in the process of being set up in an effort to make contact with groups that are difficult to reach (for example, those living in poor remote rural areas) and provide them with access to information, ICT and learning opportunities. The centres are located in places like libraries and shopping centres and the network should be fully operational in 2002.

The **National Learning Network (NLN)** refers to measures announced by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment in December 1998 in order to develop ILT (Information and Learning Technology) in further education in England.

Its aims are:

- to give students and teachers access to teaching and learning materials, information resources, and new means of communication through connecting institutions to the Internet and linking them in computer networks;
- to develop and increase the availability of teaching and learning materials and content;
- to provide staff development to ensure competence and confidence in the use of ICT.

6.3 Establishing open broadly-based local partnerships

Summary

Areas of activity involving sometimes quite open partnerships vary widely in terms of both scale – ranging from modest local schemes to the regeneration of entire areas or the reform of a whole section of the education and training system – and the number of partnerships concerned and their aims. For example, partnerships have been set up to develop innovative schemes, encourage counselling for the benefit of users, broaden and adapt training as providers engage in joint activity and influence each other's provision, pool resources, boost contact and communication with isolated areas and, in some cases, regularly monitor individual learners. One of the most sophisticated forms of partnerships is unquestionably the learning region (see above) for which there is no single prototype as the following examples will demonstrate.

Clearly, these partnerships encourage initiatives that have greater inherent consistency. For example, some of them are simultaneously concerned with the content of training provision, its recognition, the ways it is funded, and its final formal approval on the labour market, not to mention the results of research. Others are conducive to fully integrated approaches in which the educational project of a community is considered in conjunction will all aspects of its existence, including housing, health care and local services, etc.

These partnerships are also conditioned by forms of control exercised at different levels.

- In the French Community of Belgium, the ***Pôles d'innovation technologique*** (PITech, or technological innovation centres) are priority locations for training and the provision of information resources for pupils, students and teachers. Their main aims are as follows: intensification of cooperation between different levels of education, as regards the training of students and teachers and the use of effective instruments and facilities for teaching; a strengthening of the different phases of partnership between the worlds of education and business and industry; and the adjustment of educational and training provision to trends in economic development.

  In the Flemish Community, ***Regionale Technologische Centra*** **(RTCs,** or Regional Technological Centres) have been set up and are directed primarily at technical and vocational secondary education. These centres function as a link between the world of education and employment. Schools can use high tech infrastructure provided by enterprises. However, the overall infrastructure of the latter extends well beyond ICT including, for example, highly specialised industrial equipment. Schools can also call upon RTCs to refine the various forms of apprenticeship.

- In France, several **experimental initiatives concerned with the regions** (and professional sectors) have been undertaken since 1999. These initiatives involve the *conseils régionaux* (regional councils) in linking up networks of services for vocational guidance and the formal approval of qualifications, the raising of funds from different sources for adult education and training, and the development of qualifications and training in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These initiatives have resulted in contractual arrangements between central government and the regions, including quantified objectives and procedures for evaluating the results. Activities are now undergoing a second phase of implementation.

  Furthermore, France is considering the establishment of **occupational lycées** (*lycées des métiers*) with branches of training and courses which focus on a particular occupation or occupational sector, cover levels ranging from the *Certificat d'Aptitude professionnel* (CAP) to higher education, and are for all types of learner engaged in initial training, including apprenticeship, or in-service training. In principle, they correspond to a pool of technological resources capable of stimulating partnerships with the world of economic affairs and local economic development and boosting the professional integration of young people.

- In Ireland, models of social partnership are well developed in the following contexts:

  - National partnership agreements in the spheres of pay, education, training, welfare, health, taxation and infrastructural policies are negotiated by the government with employer, trade union, farming and community and voluntary sector interests.

  - In designated areas of disadvantage, Area Based Partnerships provide for consortia approaches (employer, trade union, statutory and community and voluntary sector

interests) focused on addressing unemployment and promoting local development and integrated area-based planning.

- County/City Development Boards have recently been established in local authorities to promote a partnership approach to economic, cultural and community development.

- An Education and Training Partnership Forum provides for an integrated approach to the identification of and responses to emerging skill needs. There is increasing integration nationally and locally in education and training policy and practice, and in the forging of community and business links.

- Skillnets operate as joint employer/trade union fora providing training for SMEs.

▶ In Italy, all the recent reforms seek to **build a closer relationship between schools and the community**, by promoting cooperation between institutions and organisations which were previously accustomed to working separately. This new arrangement encourages the personal and social development of pupils and of the community as a whole. Italy has introduced **new integrated arrangements for adult education** to which **the regions make a key contribution**. Their aim is to review and broaden the provision of training for young people and adults of all ages, whether employed or unemployed. They are also intended to boost access to all schemes for adult education and initial vocational training, as well as to informal provision in the fields of culture, health education, social work, civics and physical fitness. This integrated scheme is intended to implement measures for monitoring, regulating and supporting the demand for training, which will call for considerable constructive cooperation between the appropriate regional systems and agencies in achieving the foregoing objectives. Adopted with the approval of the Joint Conference of Government and the Regions, a decree issued by the president of the Council of Ministers sets out the conditions regulating admission to training for the award of formal qualifications, as well as the official requirements relating to training pathways that may be eligible for accreditation by the education and vocational training systems, the credits acquired and the procedures governing their certification and use. The regions are responsible for implementation of these arrangements, and a special regional committee has been given the task of defining the criteria related to promoting, monitoring and evaluating the system. Representatives on the committee include all institutional players involved, including the *centri territoriali permanenti* (permanent area centres), local bodies and the social partners. Working together with the area school offices, other institutional players and the social partners and associations, the local bodies oversee the establishment of local committees for the planning and organisation of the various adult education activities. The areas for which these committees are responsible are determined by the regions in accordance with criteria laid down in regional planning. Activities are defined and managed by the area school centres together with the schools for which they are responsible, the institutions for vocational training, employment services, civic networks of adult education initiatives, public cultural facilities (including libraries, museums, theatres, film libraries, private cultural concerns and public or private training agencies, etc.), associations and universities. Man-

agement of action with a bearing on the duration and extension of the system is undertaken by multipartite bodies set up by at least two of the foregoing players. The ***Centri Territoriali Permanenti*** were set up in 1997. These centres cater for the needs of adults, by planning, organising and managing adult learning and training initiatives. They seek to satisfy the individual right to learning by arranging for appropriate vocational training and offering vocational guidance, including advice about fresh career options. Besides preparation for vocational activity and retraining, their specific objectives may include cultural and functional literacy, cultural development, and the remotivation of adults.

Furthemore, some Italian regions have encouraged the municipalities to open ***Centri per l'infanzia, l'adolescenza e la famiglia*** (CIAF, or centres for childhood, adolescence and the family) in order to pool resources and coordinate educational activity within a single structure. These centres are responsible for devising and implementing educational projects for children from their birth to the age of majority, with the involvement of the family and the school.

The centres devote attention to three major concerns:

- children from their birth to the age of 3, and their families: this concern corresponds to the new requirements of families, as well as the problem of baby and toddler childminding. In this respect, the centres cater for families which have opted for a more flexible type of education requiring greater involvement on the part of parents than conventional childminding facilities;
- educational continuity: this set of activities offers projects for the 3-6 age-group (projects to help very small children settle into school), as well as for children aged between 7 and 14, and 15 and 18 (a variety of projects concerned with education, living in the community, social awareness and skills, and training);
- the socialisation of children and preparation for life in society of adolescents and young people: this focuses on group activities and relations between adults and children; a further aim is to convey a particular form of know-how and ensure that families become more aware of problems they may encounter, as well as the special role of parents of adolescent and preadolescent children.

▶ In January 2001, the United Kingdom launched the action plan called the **National Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy – A National Strategy Action Plan** to halt decline in its poorest regions. Improvements are expected as a result of a higher standard of public services in these areas, an increase in employment, improvements in housing and health, a fall in crime and better results in schools. This integrated initiative makes communities and local economies the focal point of reform, with an intensification of effort at both local and national levels. The action plan has been inspired by the work of the 18 Policy Action Teams (PATs) formed in 1998, which made over 600 recommendations. The process represents an entirely new approach to determining which policies should be implemented. In particular, it has mobilised and involved residents in these areas, professional people from education and training but also other sectors, academic experts and civil servants. In September 2000,

the formation of the new Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) was announced. It will be responsible for guiding the government in implementing the action plan.

In Scotland, the newly designated **UHI Millennium Institute**, working with 13 Highlands and Islands educational institutions known as Academic Partners, bears witness to the ability of existing colleges and other establishments to adapt and use state-of-the-art technology to boost opportunities, break down geographical barriers and enable the inhabitants of isolated areas to secure easier access to the most advanced forms of educational and training provision. This innovative higher education institution, working with its Academic Partners, will enable young people and adults in the Highlands and Islands to remain and study in their home environment.

In addition, **Local Learning Partnerships** (LLPs) were set up in 1997. Funds were made available by the Scottish Office ([24]) Challenge Fund and, in most cases, the grant awarded was equalled or even exceeded by the contributions from other local organisations. In December 1999, a review of the LLPs concluded that these partnerships, which involved 90% of Scotland's population and led to many projects for lifelong education, had been successful. As a result, the Scottish Executive decided to pursue the initiative and earmark further annual funding of EUR 16 134 (GBP 10 000) for each LLP, subject to certain conditions (including an annual appraisal of the funding situation and the establishment of a national LLP network). This regular support is intended for the appointment of local coordinators in each LLP. The LLPs will merge with other organisations to form Careers Scotland from April 2002.

Examples of projects illustrating the learning region concept

A particularly well-developed form of partnership is that of the learning region (or urban community).

- In 2000, Germany launched the ***Lernende Regionen – Förderung von Netzwerken*** (Learning Regions – Support for the creation of Networks) with a budget of around EUR 70 million (DEM 138 million, of which DEM 50 million are from the European Social Fund) up to 2004. Its aims are to encourage the training infrastructure to adjust to the provision of lifelong learning for all citizens and increase organisational autonomy at regional level. The federal government and *Länder* are both working together for the establishment and strengthening of regional networks to link up all sectors and all potential training providers, in order to develop, test and decide in the long term on innovative measures for lifelong learning. The programme is aiming to achieve increased enrolment in training, development of the potential for self-learning, and a qualitative and quantitative improvement in the structure of provision in the interests of better user counselling.

([24]) On 1 July 2000, the Departments of The Scottish Office were transferred to the Scottish Executive. The new name reflects the fact that, following devolution, the Departments of The Scottish Office now work to the First Minister and his ministerial team, to whom powers transfer from the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Ideal learning region projects are those that attempt to tackle economic and social goals in an integrated manner. However, most of the learning region projects, briefly described below, tend to focus on either an economic or a social objective. Many of the projects described are supported by the ESF (for example, under the ADAPT Community Initiative) or education/training or research programmes, such as Leonardo da Vinci.

Economic-oriented partnerships for the development of small enterprises

A regional or local focus can offer a practical cooperation framework for the business development of small enterprises. These enterprises often have problems in the field of vocational training or human resource development. A solution to this, in many countries, has been the creation of consortia made up of private and public interests, including education, consultancy and research services. The focus of these services has been on the implementation of new technologies, business management and vocational training.

One of the best examples of this can be found in the northern part of Italy (in particular in Emilia-Romagna). A federation (made up of education and training providers, research institutes, small industry service consultants and companies themselves) has been set up to improve regional training systems. For a proper understanding of how this works in northern Italy, it has to be understood in the wider context of the establishment of what are called *industrial districts*. The latter comprise clusters of small industries, in the same locality, that cooperate *and* compete with each other in producing goods for specialised world markets in sectors such as clothing, textiles and footwear (e.g. the textile 'industrial district' centred around the town of Carpi in Emilia Romagna). Although this spirit of *clustering and cooperative competition* is created primarily through the entrepreneurship of the owners of the small enterprises themselves, strong support is provided by the local public authorities and the national government, especially with regard to matters concerning infrastructure, education and training, and research and technological development.

Similar, although less well known, developments along these lines can be found in west Jutland in Denmark, Valles Oriental in Spain, Baden-Wurtemberg in Germany, Oyonnax and Cholet in France and south-west Flanders in Belgium.

Other examples of cooperation, following different models, can be found in Germany. For example the 'Learning Region Chemnitz' involves the university, consultancy firms and the chamber of commerce in the support of small enterprises. A 'qualification network for shared learning' was also set up in Lower Saxony to facilitate the introduction of reforms in the apprenticeship system.

Examples of a territorial-focused solution to the problems confronting small companies can be found in the Cheylard and Saint Etienne areas of France. In Austria, a **learning pyramid** model, at company, inter-company and regional levels, has been implemented in the region around Graz. In the north-east of England in the United Kingdom, a project to meet the needs

of entrepreneurs, with regard to the design and delivery of training and advice about training has been carried out.

In the Netherlands, vocational training institutes have set themselves up as **regional agents** situating themselves at the crossroads of regional and sectoral policies. They aim to build up the innovation capacity of companies through developing their collective learning capacities (see above). In the southern part of Sweden, region-based **learning networks** have been set up to address the manufacturing sector, the issue of women entrepreneurs and public sector reform.

A programme named **Skillsnets** using many of the partnership notions underlying the *learning region* concept has been introduced in Ireland. This programme, which is supported by the ESF, has established 60 networks representing 4 500 companies. The focus is on partnerships between employer and trade union bodies at local level for the furthering of training and lifelong learning.

In the United Kingdom, **City Learning Centres**, which are being established in England as part of *Excellence in Cities* (an initiative to improve the education of city children), use ICT to deliver extended educational opportunities to pupils in targeted areas of major cities. While the facilities are based at a host secondary school, the service provided is shared between a network of named partner schools. The centres aim to improve access to, and use of, the latest education technology by pupils and adults, improve attainment levels through use of that technology, increase staying on rates, reduce truancy figures, improve employment prospects and act as test beds for innovation and new ways of teaching and learning.

Local initiatives with social objectives

Initiatives dealing with more social objectives have attempted to harness the collective efforts of people from different interest groups with the view to enhancing their living standards and quality of life. The emphasis has been on promoting *self-help* through empowering local communities. This has entailed experiments in new types of democracy with the close and active participation of the *community sector* (that is, voluntary groups or what is also referred to as the 'civil society'). This new type of social organisation, based on the notion of partnership, means the decentralisation of authority to representative local groups who have the resources and autonomy to run programmes. The key to success is the adoption of a pragmatic *problem-solving* approach through which people set aside their ideological viewpoints to participate in a development partnership.

An issue which is being tackled in this manner in France is that of the integration of young people in the workforce. A territorial approach has provided a context for the integration of employment and training policies. The ***missions locales*** also in France, while founded on similar principles, are attempting to address more serious social problems, for example those affecting migrants on the outskirts of large urban areas.

A programme entitled **Building Learning Communities** is focusing on the needs of socially disadvantaged young people in the Autonomous Communities of Catalonia and the Basque Country in Spain. It is felt that learning methodologies based on new dialogue and communication frameworks are necessary in order to achieve lasting transformations. In Ireland, so-called Area-Based Partnerships (ABPs) were created in urban and rural areas to address economic disintegration and its consequences. The organisational structures of these partnerships tend to blur the distinctions between public and private, national and local government, representative democracy and direct participation in public affairs. The ABPs use participatory methodologies and are largely independent of local statutory government. Although they complement local government, they are not obliged to account for themselves to it. Among the tasks of these partnerships, is the setting up of innovative training projects which are tailor-made to meet local needs.

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CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The general educational level of all groups in society is of the greatest concern to government leaders today. Lack of qualifications has become an anomaly in the society of knowledge. Active involvement in civic democracy as well as an effective contribution to economic prosperity require a command of increasingly complex knowledge and skills. The personal, social and professional lives of all people turn on a series of inevitable yet difficult decisions which they have to be capable of confronting clearly.

The general level at which studies are completed, together with second – or even third – chance provision and the links between school achievement and the benefits of experience are now thus attracting unprecedented attention. The initiatives implemented in the various national systems differ in many respects. Everywhere opposite trends coexist given the numerous and contrasted expectations placed on education systems. Yet certain trends are especially prominent. There is emphasis on an effective grasp of new basic skills and, with them, on the definition of standards to be attained. Yet all players, and not least of all the teachers/trainers and learners themselves, have to be persuaded that everyone can achieve results corresponding to those standards. Systems of education and training are being rationalised and reorganised, often in the belief that benefits may be derived from greater autonomy for schools and other institutions, and that more comprehensive systems-based approaches, including guidance and counselling services, are necessary. Partnerships and the use of ICT are helping to achieve these fresh aims by providing for greater overall consistency, flexibility, a broader range of options and, in certain cases, economies of scale. ICT is not however a panacea for all ills. Rather than increased investment, the emphasis is on rebuilding systems or parts of systems as the means to improving overall effectiveness.

These general measures are often increasingly introduced in cooperation with firms or all social partners. As emphasised by Kjell Rubenson during the conference on adult education in Eskilstuna in March 2001 ([25]), they enable the general level of achievement to be improved. Admittedly, they are doubtless of special benefit to those who are already the most educated. Yet this is of no little importance, particularly for countries which consider that their education and training system still has the potential for significant further development. On the other hand, such general measures will probably not lessen the gap between the most educated and least educated groups. They may even accentuate it, thus further compromising the goal of social cohesion. Only by implementing special schemes backed by adequate resources for the benefit of these particularly vulnerable target groups will the chances of lessening this gap be increased. Furthermore, recognition of informally acquired skills and the development of new non-formal and informal learning processes and environments may help motivate these self-same groups to return to education and training. As amply illustrated in the preceding chapters, action along these lines is proceeding, with the *Kunskapslyftet* ([26]) initiative in Sweden perhaps a prime example.

([25]) See the Introduction to this publication.
([26]) The *Kunskapslyftet* initiative is described in more detail in the chapter on the first Key Message of the *Memorandum*.

Somewhat provocatively, Albert Tuijnman ([27]) emphasised during the Eskilstuna conference that the most prominent 'learner' countries were also those which would continue to move most rapidly towards an advanced knowledge society and economy. In the light of the declared aims of the Heads of State and Government at the Lisbon summit in March 2000, this prediction, in his view, requires European cooperation in education to ensure that the European Union becomes *the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.* ([28]) As a result, he recommends the development of active education policies analogous to past active employment policies intended to wipe out massive unemployment by offering training provision for the unemployed with no loss of social benefits. While Albert Tuijnman leaves the task of determining the precise content of such policies to the policy-makers themselves, in accordance with their own objectives, he nonetheless states that he regards these *active education policies* as something more than a venture concerned merely with employment or with support solely for the least privileged.

Differing interpretations of the IALS ([29]) conclude that prospects for community or area development are more critically linked to the existence of very poorly educated or untrained groups of people than to the general literacy of their population. This is the premise governing a variety of initiatives which are now concentrating specifically on the most vulnerable groups. Furthermore, it is now generally accepted that the public authorities, firms and individuals should all contribute to lifelong education. Besides, as the introduction emphasised in its summary of Kjell Rubenson's remarks, formal education tends to benefit those who are already educated, firms scrupulously select those whose training they finance and informal provision cannot be expected to deal with all remaining problems on its own. Such are the circumstances under which the role of national, regional, local and European public authorities has to be redefined. It must in any event be generally based on a sounder body of data and analysis which still has to be built up. While the existence of the IALS survey and the usefulness of some of its results for analytical purposes should be welcomed, it has demonstrated that even an approach based on sophisticated psychological measurements is liable to yield at least partly questionable findings, because they depend on the reliability of linguistic and cultural factors.

If there is one area in which European cooperation can make a significant contribution, it is in developing this potential for analysis without overlooking the variety and specific nature of all sets of circumstances that have to be taken into account. Cedefop and Eurydice, for their part, plan to continue cooperating with this aim in mind, by mobilising the resources and mechanisms available to them.

([27]) Albert Tuijman is Professor at the University of Stockholm Institute of International Education.
([28]) Conclusions of the presidency at the Lisbon European Council on 23-34 March 2000.
([29]) International Adult Literacy Survey.

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